

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

Translated from Classical Armenian  
by Robert Bedrosian

*To the memory of unforgettable friends, Anya and Jacques Kayaloff*

**Sources of the Armenian Tradition (Long Branch, New Jersey, 2010)**

This translation is in the public domain. It may be copied and distributed freely.

---

[Translator's Preface](#)  
[A Note on Pagination](#)

Online:  
[Chronological Tables](#)  
[Maps](#)

## Book 1

### [Chapters 1-4.](#)

1. Preamble to the *History of the Aghuans*.
  2. The genealogy of Japheth's line.
  3. The countries which know writing.
  4. Vagharshak establishes a government for the Aghuans.
- 

### [Chapters 5-6.](#)

5. Exposition on the fertility and abundance of Aghuania, and what it has for the needs of humankind.
  6. Knowledge of the appearance of God comes to us easterners. Accurate history.
- 

### [Chapters 7-9.](#)

7. Discovery of the relics of Saint Elisha, Illuminator of the East.
8. From [the time of] Ar'an until King Ur'nayr we have not found [chronologically] arranged narratives, rather [this period] was recorded only in passing, [detailing] what was needed to inform.
9. Ur'nayr believes and is baptized by Saint Gregory and, with one accord, the Aghuans are illuminated by King Ur'nayr.

### [Chapters 10-12.](#)

10. Regarding Vach'e', king of the Aghuans; how he abandoned pagan error and believed in the living God, and how he became a cenobite living a blessed life in the wilderness following war with Persia.

11. The letter from Bishop Giwt [of Armenia] to Saint Vach'e'.

12. Trdat wars against the king of the Basilk' in the land of the Aghuans; Sanatruk's rule as king over the Aghuans and his resistance to the Armenians; the arrival of Xosrov with his troops in aid; his taking of Aghuania and imposition of taxation.

---

### [Chapters 13-14.](#)

13. Shapuh enthrones Tiran; he is saved from the northerners; he blinds Tiran; the disturbance among the northerners; the death of Arshak and the enthronement of Pap; the fall of Mehruzhan and the wound that Ur'nayr received in that battle.

14. A brief account of Saint Gregory, Illuminator of the Armenians, and about his venerable sons; the ordination of Saint Grigoris, son of Vrt'ane's, grandson of the great Saint Gregory, to the *kat'oghikosate* of the Aghuans and Iberians/Georgians; his coming to the land of the Aghuans for its illumination; his martyrdom and the bringing of his relics.

---

### [Chapter 15.](#)

List of the names of the succession of rulers who are known from [the time of] Japheth and Ar'an until Vach'agan III.

### [Chapter 16.](#)

The institutions created by King Vach'agan for the Aghuans as well as his life and deeds and the discovery of the relics of the Saints.

### [Chapter 17.](#)

The enthronement of Vagharshak, and how Vach'agan received his kingdom of Aghuania from him.

### [Chapter 18.](#)

The establishment by King Vach'agan of royal schools for the evil-born children of sorcerers; the discovery of the unclean sect of finger-cutters and their end.



### [Chapter 19.](#)

The discovery of the relics of the blessed Zacharias, father of John, and of the blessed Pantaleon who was martyred in the city of Nicomedia, which the young Grigoris had brought to the land of the Chighbs.

### [Chapter 20.](#)

The discovery of the relics of the blessed youth Grigoris, who had been martyred in the presence of King Sane'san of the Masgut'k'.

---

### [Chapter 21.](#)

King Vach'agan's letter to all the bishops and priests asking that, through their prayers, the hidden treasure might be revealed to him.

### [Chapter 22.](#)

The venerable monk Job converts the very large district of Parskank' in Artsakh.

### [Chapter 23.](#)

In the same assembly Xochkorik, the illegitimate son of the Aghuan king Esuaghe'n, who had been appointed a governor, narrates to the king a vision he had.

### [Chapters 24-25.](#)

24. King Vach'agan's question to the learned priest Matt'e'.

25. The letter from the blessed Abraham, bishop of the Mamikoneans, to Vach'agan, king of Aghuania, concerning the dead.

---

### [Chapter 26.](#)

The canons of Vach'agan, king of the Aghuans, issued at the assembly at Aghue'n.

### [Chapter 27.](#)

Narrative history about Saint Mesrop and his companions.

### [Chapter 28.](#)

An account of Saint Mashtots' students is presented below.

### [Chapter 29.](#)

The invasion of all the borders of Aghuania, Armenia, and Georgia by the Northerners, and the martyrdom of Mesrob's students.

### [Chapter 30.](#)

The great general of the Tubal troops believes in Christ, [and accepts] that He is God; and how [the general] is martyred with his troops, children, and his clergy by his king in the land of the Aghuans.

---

## **Book 2**

### [Chapter 1.](#)

History according to my book.

### [Chapter 2.](#)

How the Aghuans were threatened by the impious Yazdgird and were saved by Vardan, Armenia's general.

### [Chapter 3.](#)

Mesrob *Vardapet* comes to Esuaghe'n, king of Aghuania, invents an alphabet, organises schools again, and destroys the remaining sects, confirming the faith in the house of the Aghuans

### [Chapter 4.](#)

The transfer of the patriarchal see of Aghuania from Ch'oray to the great city of Partaw due to the Khazars' destructive raids.

### [Chapter 5.](#)

The appearance of the martyrs on Mount Dizap'ayt and the discovery of their relics in the time of Abas' patriarchate.

---

### [Chapter 6.](#)

The vision of Vehik.

### [Chapters 7-8.](#)

7. The letter from Yovhanne's, *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, to Lord Abas, *kat'oghikos* of Aghuania, concerning the confirmation of the Faith.

8. The expulsion from Aghuania of the heretics whom Lord Abas, *kat'oghikos* of Aghuania, exiled on receipt of the above letter.

### [Chapter 9.](#)

History of the rising of barbarian peoples and about the universal disasters which befell the lands.

#### [Chapter 10.](#)

This historical account begins from the first [year] of the 18th *nahanj*.

---

#### [Chapter 11.](#)

How Xosrov mobilized his troops against the emperor of Byzantium and defeated him for many years by sword and enslavement on Byzantine territory.

#### [Chapter 12.](#)

Arrival of the Northern troops to aid Heraclius.

#### [Chapter 13.](#)

The slaying of Xosrov.

#### [Chapter 14.](#)

Concerning Viroy, head of the *kat'oghikosate* of Aghuania, and the great tribulations and the mercies of God

#### [Chapter 15.](#)

About the famine, sword, and captivity which occurred together.

---

#### [Chapter 16.](#)

About the great miracles which avenged us of our enemies.

#### [Chapter 17.](#)

How the Mihrakan clan, which derived from the line of Xosrov the Sasanian, became head of the Aghuan Houses.

#### [Chapter 18.](#)

The deeds and valor of the great prince Juanshir, second son of Varaz-Grigor, who demonstrated bravery and courage among the Persians.

#### [Chapter 19.](#)

Concerning the *sparapetut'iwn* of Juanshir, his victories over the Persians, the death of Yazdgird, and Juanshir's submission to the emperor of Byzantium.

#### [Chapter 20.](#)

Juanshir's letter to Constantine [Constans II, 641-668], emperor of the Byzantines.

---

#### [Chapter 21.](#)

Text of the document [of Constans II's reply].

## [Chapter 22.](#)

The Byzantine emperor comes to Persia and summons Juanshir.

## [Chapter 23.](#)

Concerning the raid of the Khazars and their defeat by Juanshir on the far side of the Kur River.

## [Chapter 24.](#)

The completion of the temple of the Lord in the fortress of Gardman and its dedication by Juanshir; it is consecrated, and the Cross of Christ is erected in it.

## [Chapter 25.](#)

The prayer of Juanshir.

---

## [Chapter 26.](#)

Juanshir's alliance with the Huns and his establishment of friendship with his enemies.

## [Chapter 27.](#)

You shall find here [a description of] what great honors the king of the South gave to [Juanshir] the prince of the East.

## [Chapter 28.](#)

Juanshir goes a second time to the tyrant of the South; his wise aid to the Greeks, and the halving of the tribute.

## [Chapter 29.](#)

The vision of Israye'l, hermit and man of God, concerning St. Mashtots' and his martyred students and the discovery of the holy cross which was at Gis.

## [Chapters 30-31.](#)

[Texts of ecclesiastical letters.]

---

## [Chapter 32.](#)

The Aghuan lords form contaminating marriage ties and are accursed.

## [Chapter 33.](#)

The holy man of God Israye'l becomes a priest; a narrative account of the discovery of the holy Cross.

## [Chapter 34.](#)

The death of the great prince Juanshir.

### [Chapter 35.](#)

Elegy on the death of the great prince Juanshir.

---

### [Chapter 36.](#)

Varaz Trdat sits on Juanshir's throne as prince; the Huns seek vengeance for [Juanshir's] murder; and how [Varaz Trdat] made peace with them.

### [Chapter 37.](#)

Concerning the reign of Varaz Trdat, how he received station and honor from many places; the death of Dawit', bishop of Mets Kuenits', and his replacement by Israye'l, who was a good leader.

### [Chapter 38.](#)

Israye'l is sent by the great prince Varaz Trdat to the great patriarch of Armenia Sahak in the district of Ayrarat and to the pious prince as an expression of friendship.

### [Chapter 39.](#)

Prince Varaz Trdat confers with his lords about sending Bishop Israye'l to the country of the Huns regarding conciliation.

### [Chapter 40.](#)

Bishop Israye'l confirms the land of the Huns (Honastank') in the faith, due to his teachings and they listen to him sweetly because of the miracles he worked.

### [Chapter 41.](#)

The Huns believe in Christ through the efforts of Bishop Israye'l; the sacrificial altars are destroyed and the Cross of Christ is erected.

### [Chapter 42.](#)

The discussion held by the great prince of the Huns Ilut'uer with his lords about getting Bishop Israye'l to remain among them and establish a patriarchal see there.

### [Chapter 43.](#)

The return of Israye'l, bishop of Mets Koghman', from the Huns, accompanied by two [Hun] chiefs requesting that he be made their leader.

### [Chapter 44.](#)

The letter of the prince of the Huns to the land of the Armenians, written with the same intention.

### [Chapter 45.](#)

Response to the letter from the Huns.

## [Chapters 46-49.](#)

46. The question asked by Dawit', bishop of Mets Koghants', of Yovhann Mayrogomets'i, concerning images and pictures.

47. Information concerning the time when the evil Council of Chalcedon was cursed, and how Aghuania remained unaffected by the heresy; the schism of the Georgians from the Armenians, and what the *kat'oghikos* Abraham did concerning the Aghuanians.

48. Concerning [the remonstrances made] by the Greeks to the Armenians for not having the nine grades in the hierarchy of the Church; the efforts of the Armenians to make the Aghuanians subordinate to them as an archbishopric, to which the Aghuans do not agree; Siwnik' turns from the Armenians to the Aghuanians for consecration and chrism.

49. The reply given by the Armenians to the letter of Mxit'ar, bishop of Amaras, concerning some blasphemies contained in his writings.

## [Chapter 50.](#)

Concerning the hermit Yovse'p' who lived in Artsakh, went to Jerusalem, and returned bringing with him relics of the Saints.

## [Chapter 51.](#)

The number and type of churches built in holy Jerusalem. You will find the truth here.

## [Chapter 52.](#)

Concerning those monasteries built in the name of the Aghuans in Jerusalem, according to what we have learned from [the letter of] the venerable Anastasius to Vahram Mamikonean

---

# **Book 3**

## [Chapter 1.](#)

First, regarding the attack made [on us] by the people of Ishmael from the Southern country with the aim of ruling the entire world; and about the beginnings of the false prophet Muhammad.

## [Chapter 2.](#)

The caliphs who held power after Muhammed, the false prophet.

## [Chapter 3.](#)

Concerning a certain Nerse's Bakur, a Diophysite, who became *kat'oghikos* of Aghuania.

## [Chapter 4.](#)

Letter of homage from the united Aghuan synod to Eghia, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians.

## [Chapter 5.](#)

Letter from Eghia, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians to Caliph 'Abd al-Malik, about the same matter.

## [Chapter 6.](#)

Caliph 'Abd al-Malik's answering letter to Eghia, Armenia's *kat'oghikos*.

## [Chapter 7.](#)

The arrival of Armenia's *kat'oghikos* Eghia at Partaw; the punishment of Nerse's; and the enthronement in his stead of the head of the deacons, Sime'on, by the will of the Aghuanian synod.

## [Chapters 8-9.](#)

8. The signature which Eghia, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, extracted from the Aghuanian synod for the sake of unity and a firm alliance between the Armenians and the Aghuans.

9. An account of the agreement by the Lord Eghia, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, addressed to the Aghuans.

## [Chapter 10.](#)

Document containing the names of the Aghuanian lords in order of their precedence which Caliph 'Abd al-Malik's eunuch took and deposited in the royal diwan.

---

## [Chapter 11.](#)

The canons of Lord Sime'on, *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans, after the downfall of Nerse's.

## [Chapter 12.](#)

The demands for taxes made on Varaz Trdat, prince of the Aghuans; his travel to the Byzantines where he left his sons as hostages; his return to his own land; and the seating of Mik'ayel on the [patriarchal] throne of the Aghuans after Sime'on.

## [Chapter 13.](#)

Concerning the meeting convened by Mik'aye'l, *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans to prevent marriages between near relatives.

## [Chapter 14.](#)

An inquiry by the same Mik'ayel, patriarch of Aghuania, into the dumbness of Zacharias and the Nativity and Epiphany of the Saviour, against the Diophysite sect.

## [Chapter 15.](#)

What transpired during the days of Heraclius' son and grandson.

---

## [Chapter 16.](#)

The coming of Muhammad the Second to Armenia to subdue them; his quick traversal of

Aghuania and passage through the Choray Gates whereupon he learned about a rebellion of the Armenians; his return and arrival at the island in Lake Sewan, which he took; his defeat of the Armenian and Byzantine troops; how he took some of the princes with him to Naxijevan where he burned them alive; his departure to Syria where he died an evil death; and other important narrations.

#### [Chapter 17.](#)

The coming of the Arab prince Abdl Aziz to the Aghuanian city of Partaw; and concerning the death of two brothers, Manik and Mirzada.

#### [Chapter 18.](#)

Concerning Step'annos, bishop of Siwnik', his travel to Byzantium and bringing back of books which previously had not been found in the East; his death; and the punishment God sent.

#### [Chapter 19.](#)

Among the books of bishop Step'annos of Siwnik' is this narration about the destruction of the city of Ilion (Troy) and the building of Rome.

#### [Chapter 20.](#)

Events which occurred in Aghuania in the third century of the Armenian Era.

---

#### [Chapter 21.](#)

The trip of Mamun, prince of the Arabs, to Rome where he perished; a brief account of these matters.

#### [Chapter 22.](#)

The siege of Partaw by the son of Shex and the armies of the Armenians and the Aghuans; Samue'l usurps the dignity [of *kat'oghikos*] and goes to Dwin.

#### [Chapter 23.](#)

A brief summary of genealogies.

#### [Chapter 24.](#)

The names, years, and deeds of the Aghuanian patriarchs.



## Translator's Preface

[i] The *History of the Aghuans* is a major source for the history of the indigenous Aghuan people of Caucasia from earliest times to about A.D. 988. Aghuania (also Arran, Aghbania, Caucasian Albania) comprised parts of modern Dagestan and Azerbaijan, Armenia's eastern neighbor. Its ancient peoples and their numerous languages were noted occasionally by classical Greek and Latin authors. Like the neighboring Armenians, the Aghuans were part of the Iranian-Zoroastrian culture-world for at least a millenium. Their royalty and nobility had marriage ties with their counterparts in Iran and Armenia. Also like Armenia, Aghuania was among the countries early visited by the Apostles; and the Aghuan and Armenian churches—both Monophysite—were frequently united. Mesrop Mashtots', the fifth century Armenian linguist who created the Armenian and Iberian/Georgian alphabets, also created an Aghuanian alphabet.

It is most regrettable that whatever ancient historical sources the Aghuans may have possessed have not survived. Indeed, for the pre-Christian period, we must rely entirely on the writings of classical authors. These are described and analyzed in M. L. Chaumont's article "[Albania](#)" in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. After the Arab conquests of the 7th century, Aghuania became known as Arran and subsequently was administratively part of a large unit called Arminiya which also included parts of historical Armenia, Iberia/Georgia, and northern Mesopotamia. The history of [Arran](#) in the Islamic period is described by C. E. Bosworth in his *Encyclopaedia Iranica* article. There are also important scholarly articles on Aghuania available online [in Russian](#).

It is due to the lack of early native sources that the work translated below acquires particular significance. This *History* is the sole-surviving written account of a culture now extinct. It is the only literary artifact—aside from incidental notices in Armenian and Georgian historical sources—which describes events of note from the socio-economic, ecclesiastical, political, and military history of the Aghuan people. The *History of the Aghuans* contains a wide range of invaluable and unique historical and ethnographical information: from an astounding description of a pagan cult's ritual, to the Christian cult of relics, from the Aghuan king at table, to a description of the royal court on the move, from descriptions of Sasanian presents, dress, and court protocols to a priceless interview with a Khazar Qagan. Indeed, the *History* is a primary, but under-utilized, source for the history of the Turkic Khazar kingdom (7-10th centuries). Additionally it provides otherwise unknown information on Caucasian tribes and peoples, resident and nomadic, and supplements and enhances our information on Aghuania's neighbors.

[ii] The *History of the Aghuans* exists in three books. Book One, in 30 chapters, gives a brief summary of Armenian and Aghuanian history reaching to the end of the 5th century. Book Two, in 52 chapters, describes events from the 5th-7th centuries reaching the year 683. Book Three, in 24 chapters, describes the Arab domination. It reaches into the 10th century, and also includes some final chapters from later periods.

Almost nothing biographical is known about the author(s) of the *History of the Aghuans*. The first two books may be the work of a single individual who wrote at the end of the 7th century and the beginning of the 8th. This author or compiler claims that he hailed from the district of Uti on historical Armenia's eastern borders, and possibly from the village of Dasxuran (also Kaghankatuats'). But as the celebrated Armenist Manuk Abeghyan suggested, it is quite possible that these two books are themselves compilations. Discrepancies in style and occasional discrepancies in person among various sections in the first two books lend credence to this proposal. The author of the bulk of the third book, on the other hand, clearly lived some centuries later.

He describes events occurring up to the late 980s. Yet the final event mentioned in Book Three occurred in the reign of Senek'erim king of Siwnik' (1080-1105). Thus more than one hand is apparent in the third book as well as in the first two. "Movse's" to whom the entire work is attributed, could have been any of the authors or compilers from the 7th through the early 12th centuries.

Although biographical details are lacking, we may construct a partial portrait of the author(s) based on the contents of the three books and the treatment of certain topics. The compiler of Books One and Two (hereafter we shall call him Movse's, for convenience) was an educated cleric with an impressive vocabulary. His prose style is highly ornate, full of alliteration, extended similes, and allusions to Biblical personalities and situations. He had a penchant for long sentences with many subordinate clauses. The documents Movse's had at hand were varied. They included Church-related materials: lists of Patriarchs, martyrologies, narratives such as the account of the discovery and elimination of the cult of the finger-cutters, the sojourn of Mesrop Mashtots' in Aghuania, the Aghuanian conversion of some Altaic Hun leaders to Christianity; and correspondence between various Church leaders about doctrine and sectarians. Some of the religious material in Book One originally seems to be the work of extremely pious, incredulous clerics, enamoured of Christian wonder-tales. More secular material is represented in the List of Rulers (I. 15), the Law Code of King Vach'agan (I. 26), the account of the invasion of the Huns (I.29), the chapters in Book Two on the Khazars (II. 11-16), and the *gestes* of Prince Juansher (II. 18 ff.). Much of this material probably derives from Church and Royal archives. Movse's also had at hand some Armenian historical works such as P'awstos Buzand, Ghazar P'arpets'i, Movse's Xorenats'i, and perhaps Sebeos and used them, as needed, for the historical glue to hold together the different documents when he was unable to find native sources. However, the *stylistic* glue which holds Book One and Book Two together is the learned Movse's' euphuistic writing style.

[iii] The fineness of Movse's' Classical Armenian suggests that he was a well-educated cleric and that either: (1) he was an ethnic Armenian with the requisite command of Aghuanian to read material written in Aghuanian; or (2) he was an ethnic Aghuan with a remarkable knowledge of Armenian. In the historical period covered in Books One and Two, the Armenian language appears to have been used as a second language in the Aghuan Church. Consequently, it is even possible that some of the Aghuan archival material was written in Armenian or existed in Armenian copies when Movse's used it.

With Book Three, a different personality emerges. This author or compiler has a simpler and more straightforward writing style. He is less interested in relics and miracles than Movse's, but quite interested in heresies, schismatics, and Christological issues. He is a bitter foe of Islam. Book Three is the shortest of the three books and the most "historical." It contains, in addition to invaluable material about the negative impact of the Arab domination, otherwise unknown information about the birth, life, and death of the Prophet Muhammad, and similarly unique information about the rebellion of Babak in the 830s. Like Books One and Two, Book Three is best characterized as a collection of documents.

*A History of the Aghuans* certainly existed in Armenian in some form in the 10th century, since the Armenian *kat'oghikos* Anania Mokats'i mentions consulting it in 948. There was debate about the author already in the 13th century among Armenian clerics. But irrespective of the original language or the identities of the author(s) of this important compilation, the resultant product is a splendid Armenian literary history, in the same tradition as the medieval Armenian translation of the [Georgian Chronicle](#). The 12-13th century Armenian cleric Mxit'ar Gosh, who mentions using a *History of the Aghuans*, brought a record of Aghuan events forward to his own time. Gosh's important [Aghuanian Chronicle](#) is available on another page of this website.

[iv] The Classical Armenian text of the *History* was published in 1860 in two places: in Paris by Karapet Shahnazarean [*Patmut'iwn Aghuanits' arareal Movsisi Kaghankatuats'woy*, 2 vols.] and in Moscow by Mkrtich' Emin [*Movsisi Kaghankatuats'woy Patmut'iwn Aghuanits' ashxarhi*, reprinted Tiflis, 1912]. The

Shahnazarean edition has been the preferred one until the publication of the critical edition by Varag Arak'elyan, *Patmut'iwn Aghuanits' ashxarhi*, S. A. Avagyan, editor (Erevan, 1983). Arak'elyan's excellent text was available to us online as part of the Armenian Classical Digital Library Project. [Arak'elyan's text is now available for downloading at Internet Archive [Պատմութիւն Աղուանից աշխարհի](#).] A full Russian translation by K. P. Patkanean appeared in St. Petersburg in 1861. A more recent Russian translation by Sh. V. Smbatyan was published in Erevan in 1984. Partial and selective translations have appeared in French, Georgian and Turkish. The *History* was translated into English by C. J. F. Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movse's Dasxuranc'i* (London, 1961), based on the Shahnazarean edition and several other manuscripts. Dowsett's scholarly edition is accompanied by an excellent [Introduction](#) which discusses theories of authorship and the manuscript tradition. We have relied on Dowsett's translation completely for chapters dealing with theological and Christological issues. Our own translation of Books One and Two was initially made from the Shahnazarean edition and follows its pagination. Subsequently it was corrected according to the online critical edition. Our translation of Book Three was made directly from the online critical edition.

Currently the most accessible scholarly treatment of the history of Aghuania in English is found in the aforementioned writings of M. L. Chaumont and C. E. Bosworth, plus in the writings of the great Caucasiologist Cyril Toumanoff, especially his *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Georgetown, 1963); and his article, "Armenia and Georgia," [Chapter XIV in *The Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, The Byzantine Empire, part I, (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 593-637]. [Studies by Cyril Toumanoff at Internet Archive](#) has links to these and other works by the author. Perhaps the best, most current English-language source for the history of Aghuania is Robert H. Hewsen's *Armenia: A Historical Atlas* (Chicago, 2001). Hewsen's beautiful maps are accompanied by text which meticulously documents the changing borders and vicissitudes of the Aghuan people and state.

Robert Bedrosian  
Long Branch, New Jersey 2010

# Armenian/Georgian

Armenian	Georgian	
Ա ա	ა	a
Բ բ	ბ	b
Գ գ	გ	g
Դ դ	დ	d
Ե ե	ე	e
Զ զ	ზ	z
Է է	[Ø]	ē
Ը ը	< շ >	ə
Թ թ	თ	t'
Ժ ժ	ქ	z
Ի ի	ი	i
Լ լ	ლ	l
Խ խ	ხ	x
Ծ ծ	წ	c
Կ կ	კ	k
Հ հ	ჟ	h
Ձ ձ	ძ	j
Ղ ղ	წ	ɬ
Ճ ճ	ჭ	č

Armenian	Georgian	
Մ մ	მ	m
Յ յ	[o]	y
Ն ն	ნ	n
Շ շ	შ	š
Ո ո	ო	o
Չ չ	ჩ	č
Պ պ	პ	p
Ջ Ջ	ჯ	j
Ռ რ	რ	r
Ս ս	ს	s
Վ վ	ვ	v
Տ տ	ტ	t
Ր ր	რ	r
Ց ც	ც	c
Ռ ր	რ	w
Փ փ	ფ	p'
Ք ք	ქ	k'
Օ օ	ო	o
Ֆ ფ	(ფ)	f
Ե Է	(ე)ევ	yev

# Aghuanian

Ⲑ	ⲑ	Ⲓ	ⲓ	Ⲕ	ⲕ	Ⲍ
a	b	(g)	(d)	(e)	z	e <sub>2</sub>
ⲍ	Ⲏ	ⲏ	Ⲑ	ⲑ	Ⲓ	ⲓ
ʒ	th	tʃ	j	ʒ <sub>2</sub>	i	ʃ
Ⲕ	ⲕ	Ⲍ	ⲍ	Ⲏ	ⲏ	Ⲑ
l	l <sub>2</sub>	x	d <sub>2</sub>	tʃ <sub>2</sub>	z <sub>2</sub>	k
ⲑ	Ⲓ	ⲓ	Ⲕ	ⲕ	Ⲍ	ⲍ
l	h	h <sub>2</sub>	a <sub>2</sub>	tsh <sub>2</sub>	tʃ <sub>3</sub>	tʃh
Ⲏ	ⲏ	Ⲑ	ⲑ	Ⲓ	ⲓ	Ⲕ
m	k <sub>2</sub>	n	ʃ	ʃ <sub>2</sub>	ʃ <sub>2</sub>	o
ⲕ	Ⲍ	ⲍ	Ⲏ	ⲏ	Ⲑ	ⲑ
t	x <sub>2</sub>	dʒ	tʃh <sub>2</sub>	p	ʒ	(r)
ⲑ	Ⲓ	ⲓ	Ⲕ	ⲕ	Ⲍ	ⲍ
s	v	t <sub>2</sub>	s <sub>2</sub>	i <sub>3</sub>	ts	tsh
Ⲏ	ⲏ	Ⲑ				
w	ph	kh				

A 5th-century biography of Mesrop Mashtots' written by his student Koriwn is available on another page of this website. Koriwn's [Life of Mashtots'](#) describes Mashtots' creation of alphabets for the Armenians, Georgians, and Aghuanians.

## A Note on Pagination

---

The printed editions of these online texts show the page number at the top of the page. In the right margin the pagination of the Classical Armenian (*grabar*) text also is provided. We have made the following alterations for the online texts: the page number of the printed English editions (*Sources of the Armenian Tradition* series) appears in square brackets, in the text. For example [101] this text would be located on page 101, and [102] this text would be on page 102. The *grabar* pagination is as follows. This sentence corresponds to the information found on page 91 of the Classical Armenian text [g91] and what follows is on page 92. In other words, the Classical Armenian text delimiters [gnn] indicate **bottom** of page.

The transliteration used here is a modification of the new Library of Congress system for Armenian, substituting **x** for the LOC's **kh**, for the thirteenth character of the Armenian alphabet (խ). Otherwise we follow the LOC transliteration, which eliminates diacritical marks above or below a character, and substitutes single or double quotation marks to the character's right. In the LOC romanization, the seventh character of the alphabet (տ) appears as **e'**, the eighth (ք) as **e''**, the twenty-eighth (ռ) as **r'**, and the thirty-eighth (օ), as **o'**.

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book One

---

#### 1.

#### *Preamble to the History of the Aghuans.*

The first man created by God, our father Adam, lived 230 years and became the father of Seth. Seth lived 205 years and became the father of Enosh. Enosh lived 190 years and became the father of Cainan. Cainan lived 170 years and became the father of Mahalalel. Mahalalel lived 165 years and became the father of Jared. Jared lived 162 years and became the father of Methuselah. Methuselah lived 167 years and became the father of Lamech. Lamech lived 168 years and became the father of Noah. Noah lived 500 years and became the father of three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

The Flood occurred one hundred years after Shem's birth. This was in the 600th year of Noah. From [the time of] Adam until the Flood 2,242 years had passed and 10 generations [*end of grabar* (Classical Armenian) text page 87; henceforth shown as, for example, g87].

---

#### 2.

#### *The genealogy of Japheth's line.*

You will find here, in its appropriate place, information about the [territorial] borders of Japheth and his genealogy. Noah gave the following borders to Japheth [after] demanding from the brothers that they would not dispossess each other: from Media to Cadiz (Gadiron) in the north, to the Tigris River which stretches between Media and Babylon. Japheth's sons were Gomer from whom the Cappadocians (Gamirk') derived; Magog, from whom came the Celts (Keghtk') and Galatians; Madai, from whom the Medes descended; Javan, ancestor of the Hellenes and Greeks; Tubal, progenitor of the T'etalk'; Mosoch, from whom descended the Lurikats'ik'; Tiras, ancestor of the Thracians; and Kittim, father of the Macedonians. The sons of Tiras were Ashkenaz, father of the Samatians, and Riphath, ancestor of the Sauromatians, and T'orgom, ancestor of the Armenians.

[2] The sons of Javan were Elishah, father of the Sicilians and Athenians; Tarshish, father of the Georgians and Turanians; and Kitris, ancestor of the Romans, Latins, and Rhodians. In all, there were 15 generations.

From these [folk] there arose and separated off the pagan islands such as the Cypriots, descended from Japheth's sons the Kiturats'ik' [g88]. Those dwelling in the north are the relations of the Kiturats'ik', such as the Aghuans. The peoples in the Hellene land descend from those who migrated there subsequently, such as the Ayetats'ik' who dwell in the city of Athens, honored by the Greeks and Thebans.

The Sidonians, who arose and emigrated, were descended from Agenor's son, Cadmos. The Carthaginians emigrated from Tyre. Now [at the time of] the confusion of languages, there had arisen from Japheth 15 peoples, from Media to Hesperia, which extends to Ocean and looks northward. This is their country: Atrpatakan, Aghuania, Amazonia, Greater and Lesser Armenia, Cappadocia, Galatia, Colchis, India, Bosphoria, Maeotis, Der'is, Sarmatia, Tawrinis, Sawromate's, Scythia, Thrace, Macedonia, Dalmatia, Movghis, Thessaly, Locris, Boeotia, Hetaghia, Attica, Achaea, Peghenis, Akarne's, Hupiristim, Ghiuria, Ghik'nitis, Adriake', and from this the Adriatic Sea, Gaul, Spanish Gaul, Iberia, Greater Spain. Here end the borders of Japheth's line], stretching to the British Isles. And all look to the north [g89].

---

### 3.

#### *The countries which know writing.*

The countries which are acquainted with writing are [those of]: the Hebrews, the Latins including the Romans, the Spaniards, the Greeks, the Medes, the Armenians, and the Aghuans. Their boundaries extend from Media northward as far as Cadiz, from the Pargamitos River as far as Matusia, which is Ilion.

[Included are] the islands: Sicily, Euboia, Rhodes, Chios, Lesbos, Kit'era, Zakynthos, Cephalonia, Ithaca, Corfu (Korkiria) and Kiwghade's, and the part of Asia called Ionia; the Tigris River which flows between Media and Babylon. These are the borders of Japheth.

[3] Shem held the eastern portions of the world and Ham, the southern parts, while Japheth held the western and northern areas where the Aghuans and the Caspian Sea are located and the eastern mountains. In the west these peoples extend as far as Trapizond.

From [the period of] Japheth until Tigran there were 44 kings and in the Iranian areas there were 14 kings from Arshak until Artawan [in the space of] 452 years.

Artashir, of the Sasanian Stahr [family], slew Artawan and eliminated the Parthian kingdom which had ruled the Iranians and [g90] Assyrians for 252 years before the coming of our savior, Christ. This was 270 years after the return from captivity of the Jews in Babylon. From these same Parthians, from Vagharshak to Artashir, son of Vr'amshapuh, there were 26 kings of the Armenians, during 620 years.

Then [political] rule was taken from the Arsacids and the patriarchate [was taken] from the clan of Saint Gregory. Now if you want to know about the Bagratids: Paroyr, son of Skayordi, called Hrach'eay, king of the Armenians, son of Hayk, requested from the king of the Babylonians one of the Jewish captives named Shambat' who was brought and settled in the country of the Armenians with great honor. The line of the Bagratids descended from him as the great line of the descendants of Japheth declined.

---

### 4.

#### *Vagharshak establishes a government for the Aghuans.*



Here begins [an account] of the government of the Aghuans. For we have nothing certain to say to our listeners about [the situation which obtained] from the creation of humanity [g91] until [the time of] Vagharshak, king of the Armenians, regarding [the folk] inhabiting the area around the great Mount Caucasus. [Vagharshak], in arranging his northern [borders], summoned the wild, foreign peoples [dwelling] in the northern plain and around the foot of the Caucasus, whether in valleys or ravines from the south as far as the entrance to the plain. And he commanded them to end their brigandage and murdering and to pay the royal taxes obediently. Thus by his order he appointed for them a leader and supervisors, chief of whom was [a man] named Ar'an, from the Sisakan clan, of the descent of Japheth, who inherited the plains and mountains of the Aghuans from the Araxes River to the fortress of Hnarakert. And that land, because of [Ar'an's] sweetness, was called Aghuank', for they called him *aghu* ["sweet", "agreeable"] because of his goodly behavior. They say that Vagharshak the Parthian designated many rulers of regions from Ar'an's line, men who were renowned and valiant. They say that from his son were descended the people of the principalities of Utik', Gardman, Cawdk', and Gargark'.

[4] Up to this point we have shown [these] genealogies [g92].

---

## 5.

### ***Exposition on the fertility and abundance of Aghuania, and what it has for the needs of humankind.***

Located in the lofty mountains of the Caucasus, the beautiful and desirable land of the Aghuans has the most precious resources. The great Kur River which gently flows through it bears large and small fish and then falls into the Caspian Sea. The plains around it contain [the materials for] much bread and wine, as well as oil and salt, silk and cotton, and countless olive trees. The mountains contain gold, silver, copper and ochre. Among the wild animals are the lion, leopard, panther, and wild ass; among the many birds are eagles, hawks, and others like them. [Aghuania's] capital is the great Partaw.

---

## 6.

### ***Knowledge of the appearance of God comes to us Easterners. Accurate history.***

We did not find [any information concerning the period] from the appointment of Ar'an over the House of the Aghuans by Vagharshak [g93] until [the time of] the valiant Vach'agan who once ruled over the Aghuan areas.

Now [we do have some information relating to] the time of the appearance of [Jesus], the Sun of Righteousness, and the coming of our salvation, the unknowable being, the light of glory, born from the being of the Father. [Jesus], having completed His ministry to all of us, dwelled again in the glory of His Father's being from which He had not separated. He had sent His blessed and precious disciples to preach throughout the world. The holy apostle Thaddaeus was given to us Easterners. [Thaddaeus] came the Armenians, to the district of Artaz, where he died a martyr's death at the hands of Sanatruk, king of the Armenians.

[5] His student, the blessed Elisha (Eghisha), returned to Jerusalem and related the enviable martyrdom of his fellow apostle. Through the influence of the Holy Spirit, Elisha was ordained at the hands of the blessed James, the Lord's brother, who was the first patriarch of Jerusalem. He took the east[ern regions] as his

diocese. He travelled from Jerusalem to the Mask'ut' via Iran, avoiding the Armenians. He began his preaching in Ch'oghay and in various places acquainted numerous students with the salvation.

Then he came to the district of Uti, to the city of Sahar'n, with three of his students. But some of their impious relatives had pursued them. One [disciple] [g94] was martyred while the remaining two quit the venerable Elisha and followed the impious and murderous men. Now the blessed patriarch came to Gis, established a church, and offered up bloodless sacrifice. This place was the first of the eastern churches and capitals, and the [initial] place of enlightenment. Thence he crossed the plain of Zergun to the place of sacrifice of the diabolical idol-worshippers, and it was there that he received the martyr's crown. It is unknown who did this deed. The murderers threw those venerable remains into a ditch in the place called Home'nk' where they remained concealed for a long time.

---

## 7.

### ***Discovery of the relics of Saint Elisha, Illuminator of the East.***

Truth should not be concealed, nor should the light be covered up. After a long period of time certain pious men had a vision [about Elisha] and came in a group to the site of the pit where they saw a jumbled heap of bones. All of them were in doubt but they removed [the bones], gathered them up, and then observed them while praying during the night. In the morning there was a great tremor [g95] which caused those standing to fall to the ground. Then a fierce wind blew from the desert which scattered across the field the bones of those who were not saints. Only the relics of the apostles remained in place. A certain pious priest [named] Step'annos, from the village of Ur'ekan, seized one skull from the pile and hastily made off on his horse. The multitude went after him. But a dark cloud with lightning appeared which frightened them, and they returned to camp.

[6] When Saint Elisha appeared [to them] in a vision, they took and buried his remains where the blessed priest Step'annos had placed his skull, in the village of Ur'ekan. Subsequently they were transferred to the holy monastery at Nersmih, which is today called Jrvshtik, to the glory of the Lord, Almighty God. Now after a long time the pious king of the Aghuans, Vach'agan, erected a pillar at the pit where Elisha had been martyred. The king's chamberlain, who had become a stylite, [dwelled] on the summit of the pillar [g96].

---

## 8.

***From [the time of] Ar'an until King Ur'nayr of the Aghuans and King Trdat of the Armenians we have not found [chronologically] arranged narratives, rather [this period] was recorded only in passing [detailing] what was needed to inform.***

It would have been most desirable to have found accounts chronologically arranged about events [occurring] from [the time of] the reign of Ar'an until this point. However, the burning of books and testaments [dealing with] the many peoples of the East explain this [absence]. Nonetheless we are served [in part] by [passages from the *History* written by] Movse's *K'ert'oghahayr* [the Father of Philology/Literature, *i.e.*, Movse's Xorenats'i] about [the Armenian king] Artawazd's warfare with the Romans. When [Artawazd (ca. 55-30 B.C.)] massed tens of thousands [of troops] from Atrpatakan he [also] called up the mighty peoples of Mount Caucasus and the troops of the Aghuans and Iberians/Georgians and went to Mesopotamia. With their power he dislodged the Roman forces.

[Subsequently], while Artashe's was campaigning against Eruand, he was within the territory of the Aghuans, in the district of Uti. He left his troops there and went to his city. Then Artashe's came and united the Aghuan troops with his own and appeared by the shore of Lake Gegham [Sevan]. With them he expelled Eruand and he himself ruled the Armenians.

[7] In this period the Alans united with all the mountain folk [g97] and some of the Iberians/Georgians and in a great mob spread about in the country of the Armenians. Artashe's also summoned his troops and went against them, camping by the shore of the Kur River. The battle raged and the crown prince of the Alans was seized by Artashe's. Consequently Artashe's took the maiden Sat'enik as a wife and, having made peace, returned [home]. Sat'enik's father died and another person seized [power] and became king. [This usurper] then persecuted [Sat'enik's] brother. Smbat, the *dayeak* [guardian/tutor] of Artashe's, came with a great army, expelled the usurper and placed Sat'enik's brother on [his] ancestral throne. Then [Smbat] returned to Armenia with great booty and many captives. He settled the captives from the district of Shawarshan in the district of Artaz. And the lordship of the Ar'aweghean clan was drawn from [the clan of] Sat'enik, which, in the time of Xosrov the Great, Trdat's father, was allied by marriage with a certain valiant man of the Basighk'.

---

## 9.

***Ur'nayr believes and is baptized by Saint Gregory and, with one accord, the Aghuans are illuminated by King Ur'nayr.***

After the venerable Elisha had begun his apostolic work in the extremities of the country [g98], he illuminated some but not all of the Easterners of the north. He conducted the campaign in a goodly fashion, striving for his people. Now in the time when God visited the human race and made the West to flourish under the great Emperor Constantine, Greater Armenia also was illuminated by the venerable Trdat. The eastern areas were also brought to the faith, areas which were little acquainted with the rising of the Sun of true salvation. Once again at the hand of Ur'nayr, [these areas] were illuminated. These divine wonders occurred at the same time.

[8] King Ur'nayr of the Aghuans was the husband of the sister of Shapuh, king of the Persians. He was a valiant man who had inherited the renown of a champion in great battles among the Armenians and had raised the flag of victory. He had a second birth at the hands of Saint Gregory, illuminator of the Armenians, and, clothed in radiant garments of the Holy Spirit, he further illuminated the Aghuans. He lived as a son of the eternal light and then quit this human existence. Now after his death, the Aghuans requested the lad Grigoris for their *kat'oghikos*. For our King Ur'nayr had asked Saint Gregory to perform holy ordination [for Grigoris] as a bishop for his land [g99]. And thus, by this canon, the lands of the Armenians and the Aghuans have abided in harmonious brotherhood and indestructible covenant to the present.

---

## 10.

***Regarding Vach'e', king of the Aghuans: how he abandoned pagan error and believed in the living God, and how he became a cenobite living a blessed life in the wilderness following war with Persia.***

In the nineteenth year of his kingship, death came to [the Iranian *shah*] Yazdgird. There was contention among his two sons and they fought over the lordship. While they were thus fighting, Vach'e', king of the Aghuans, also rebelled. For he was the son of their sister, and had previously been Christian, according to the patrimonial tradition which Ur'nayr had established. But the impious Yazdgird forcibly made him a Magian.

Now he considered this a favorable moment [to rebel], regarding it better to die in battle than to hold the kingship in apostasy.

During the protracted disturbance within the Aryan army, a certain man named R'ahat, of the Mihran clan [g100], who was the *dayeak* [guardian/tutor] of Yazdgird's younger son, came with his countless troops against the king's eldest son, attacked and destroyed his troops, seized the king's son, and slew him on the spot. He brought the surviving troops to acceptance and united them into the Aryan army. Then he enthroned his ward, who was named Peroz. But the king of the Aghuans did not want to submit in service [to the Iranians]; rather, he threw open the Ch'oghay Gates and brought through the troops of the Mask'ut'k'. He also allied with himself eleven mountain kings, came out in battle against the Aryan army and did substantial damage to the royal troops. [King Peroz] wrote edicts two and three time beseeching him, but was unable to bring him to agreement. [Vach'e'] reproached [Peroz] in writing and in messages for having vainly ruined the land of the Armenians. He also reminded him of the death of his *naxarars*, the torture of prisoners. [Vach'e'] said: "Instead of granting them life, friendship, and rewards, you took their lives. For me, it is better to die tormented than to live in apostasy."

[9] When [the Iranians] saw that neither force nor kindness would bring him to agreement [with them], they had an enormous amount of treasure taken to the land of the Xaylandurk'. And they opened the Alan Gates and brought in a large force of Huns, and battled for a year against the king of the Aghuans [g101].

Despite the fact that they depleted and dispersed his troops, they were still unable to bring [Vach'e'] into agreement. Furthermore, very great disasters befell them, some from fighting, and some from wicked diseases. Though the siege continued, and [the area called] Mets Koghm in the land was ruined, still no one deserted him.

Then King Peroz sent [this message] to Vach'e': "Send my sister and her son home, for they were Magian originally, though you made them into Christians. And then your land will be yours."

But the venerable man [Vach'e'] was not fighting for his domain, rather for his faith. He had the mother and wife taken [to Iran], [prepared] to quit the entire land taking up the Gospel. When Peroz, king of the Persians, learned about this, he repented and threw all the blame on his father. He made sincere pledges and had them delivered to him: "if only you do not quit the land, I will do whatever you say."

However [Vach'e'] agreed only to take his own private property (*sephakan*) as his portion along with the thousand families (*erd*) he had acquired from his father. These he took from the [Iranian] king and settled down in the company of monks. And thus did he live according to God, uninvolved [in worldly affairs]. Nor did he ever recall that he had once been a king. Such was his life [g102].

---

## 11.

### *The letter from Bishop Giwt [of Armenia] to Saint Vach'e'.*

We omit the translation of this chapter [pp. g103-g114], which deals with doctrinal matters. C. J. F. Dowsett's fine translation of chapter 11 is available [here](#).

***Trdat wars against the king of the Basilik' in the land of the Aghuans; Sanatruk's rule as king over the Aghuans and his resistance to the Armenians; the arrival of Xosrov with his troops in aid; his taking of Aghuania and imposition of taxation.***

Trdatios, the great king of the Armenians, mustered troops and descended into the plain of the Gargarats'ik'. [There] he encountered the Northerners and a fierce battle ensued. The king of the Basilik' did battle with him and threw a rope around the brave Trdat, but was not strong enough to throw him down. Rather, he himself was split in two by him. Trdatios commenced destroying them as far as [the territory of] the Huns. Many were felled by the Armenian troops. The *sparapet* [commander-in-chief] of the Armenians, Artawazd Mandakuni, was slain [g115]. Taking hostages and uniting the Northerners [with him], Trdatios went against Shapuh, king of the Persians.

Now when Trdat died, a certain Sanatruk ruled as king over the Aghuans in the city of P'aytakaran. [Sanatruk] then came against the Armenians. Trdat's son, Xosrov, went against the Aghuans, taking along the united force of Antiok'os with his Byzantine (Greek) troops, Bagarat with the western army, and Mihran, *bdeash* of the Iberians/Georgians. Sanatruk with Aghuanian troops hurriedly went off to Shapuh, king of the Persians, leaving many troops in the city of P'aytakaran. Antiok'os returned to the emperor with much loot and the royal taxes. Finding an opportune moment, Sanatruk, on Shapuh's orders, massed the Aghuanian troops, some 30,000 of them, and plunged into the midst of the Armenians. Now an enormous and gigantic commander of the lancers, who was clad in felt, attacked the fighters on the rocky grounds of O'shakan. And when they struck at him with their weapons, there was no effect, rather [their missiles] just bounced off. Then the valiant Vahan Amatuni, looking to the cathedral, said: "Help me." Hurling his spear into the horse's croup, he brought down that enormous animal [g116].

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book One

---

[11]

#### 13.

*Shapuh enthrones Tiran; he is saved from the Northerners; he blinds Tiran; disturbance among the northerners; the death of Arshak and the enthronement of Pap; the fall of Mehruzhan and the wound that Ur'nayr received in that battle.*

When Tiran became king of the Armenians, he made peace with the Persians, delivering Shapuh from the attacks of the northerners who were harassing Armenia after residing in Aghuania for four years. Tiran was blinded by Shapuh, [an act which] was consistent with [Shapuh's] wicked nature. [Tiran's] son Arshak took over the kingdom. During his reign there was agitation against Shapuh from the peoples of the North. [Shapuh] went to Bithynia and remained there for many months, unable to accomplish anything. He erected a column by the shore of the lake with [the figure of] a lion on the top with a book at its feet. This was symbolic of Persia, represented by the lion, and the Roman empire, by the book.

When Arshak died, Pap ruled as king. Then Mehruzhan Artsruni rebelled, ruining himself like Ahitophel. There was a great battle between Pap and Mehruzhan. At that time the valiant Shergir, king of the Ghekk', died at the hands of Spandarats [g117] Kamsarakan. Ur'nayr, the king of the Aghuans, was seriously wounded by Mushegh Mamikonean, Vasak's son. Meruzhan too, through the prayers of Saint Nerse's, perished at the hands of the *sparapet* Smbat Bagratuni, crowned on the head with red-hot iron.

---

#### 14.

*A brief account of Saint Gregory, Illuminator of the Armenians, and about his venerable sons; the ordination of Saint Grigoris, son of Vrt'ane's, grandson of the great Saint Gregory, to the kat'oghikosate of the Aghuans and Iberians/Georgians; his coming to the land of the Aghuans for its illumination; his martyrdom and the bringing of his relics.*

[12] As we mentioned earlier, one of the Lord's students, who was named Thaddeus, came to a portion of the land of Armenia. He illuminated some parts of the land of the East prior to the arrival of the renowned [spiritual] warrior and thrice-blessed Grigorios. [Gregory], upon the death of Xosrov, king of the Armenians, who was treacherously slain by Gregory's father, Anak [g118] the Parthian, who himself drowned in the Arax

River as he fled. Gregory was spirited away by certain *dayeaks* [guardians/tutors] who took and saved the venerable Gregory, taking [him] to Byzantine territory. This came to pass through the providence of great God, and resembled [the fate of] the first prophet Moses who, in an ark of bullrushes floating in the water, was saved from the hands of the wicked Pharaoh, to save the people of God from Egyptian servitude and torments.

Thus was the most blessed Gregory saved from the sword of the *naxarars* of Armenia, kept for the salvation of the land of the Armenians and all the eastern areas. He resembled a choice arrow hidden in a quiver in the land of the Byzantines, with which the invisible enemy would be wounded and killed. Chosen from his mother's womb and [chosen] as a blessed martyr while in the womb, he was sent and given to the land of Togarmah and the children of Askanaz.

Now blessed Gregory, who had been raised and nourished in the power of the Christian faith, with Apostolic and intrepid boldness came before Trdat, king of the Armenians, and with sincerity and mildness entered his service [g119] believing in the words of Paul [which urge us] to "serve the Lord of Hosts and one's human masters with humble virtue not with ostentatious service and obedience" [see Colossians 3, 22]. He became the father of two sons, Aristake's and Vrt'anes. The king, having been led astray by various demons (*dews*) and by their loathesome cults, with the aid of the wicked dragon, undertook to make [Gregory] the mighty martyr of Christ worship the gods of filth in the pit of perdition. Although [Trdat] tormented the Saint with numerous and diverse tortures, he was unable to succeed in moving the blessed man from his unshakeable faith. Rather, day by day [Gregory] bravely competed to take the prize of victory over the invisible and visible enemy. Since they could find no method to accomplish [their aim] of turning the virtuous man from faith in Christ, the evil one inspired evil thoughts in the minds of his satellites and they took and threw the blessed Grigorios into an unbelievably deep pit in the city of Artashat. For thirteen years he remained in that snake-infested place, until certain venerable women, Hr'ip'sime' and Gayane' with thirty-five companions, were martyred by the same king of the Armenians. The bodies of these venerable [women] were then cast out.

[13] Then Almighty God paid a visit to the venerable [g120] Grigorios and the venerable martyrs, the blessed Hr'ip'simeans, and delivered a great punishment to the land of Armenia. It was not so much a punishment as a token of great mercy, as a beloved son is counseled and an estranged illegitimate one is ignored. By means of those same demons whom [the pagans] had exalted with gifts and sacrifices [God made the evil spirits] come upon them as though they were enemies, made them mad and made them eat their own flesh. [God] transformed their king into a hog which fled into the reeds. Then awe and great dread engulfed everyone such that they awaited the end of the world. While everyone from the grandees to the lowly were filled with this awe and trepidation, an angel of God's mercy appeared in a night vision to a certain woman named Xosroviduxt, sister of Trdat, king of the Armenians, saying: "The only way you can escape this blow is by the hand of Saint Gregory. Go and remove him from the deep pit." She awoke and related her dream. But everyone chided the woman and said: "Have you, too, been afflicted by the demons? What chance would there be of finding even his bones [after so much time]?" Yet when the vision recurred a second and a third time, aroused by the severity of the disasters, the sceptics went to the mouth of the pit and haltingly [g121] voiced the words of God: "Come out, if you are still alive." And immediately [Gregory] informed them that he was alive.

With great rejoicing they brought him up and took him to *Nor k'aghak'* [New City, i.e. Vagharshapat] the royal seat of the Armenian king. Then they brought before the great Gregory unwillingly those folk whom the demons had made mad and who were eating their own flesh. Similarly they brought before the Saint from the rushes the demon-afflicted king. The great Saint Gregory tearfully knelt and beseeched all-merciful God for the salvation of the wretched people. And immediately, through the pleas of the Saint, they received healing for their physical torments as well as enlightenment for their souls.

Now although no one had informed [Gregory] about the venerable women Hr'ip'sime' and her companions,

who had been martyred, nonetheless in the deep pit he himself with a prophet's eye had witnessed the martyrdom of the witnesses of Christ. And he asked: "Where are the Saints' relics?" The astonished people inquired: "Which Saints is he talking about?" But when they heard the martyrs' names from him, they remembered and showed the venerable and most blessed remains. Gregory took them and wrapped them in their torn [g122] clothing and would not permit anyone to approach the bodies until they had been baptized. And he placed [the relics] in a repository in the place where the Saints had been martyred.

[14] Then Gregory taught and counselled the entire land of the Armenians, baptizing with the redeeming cross and illuminating by baptism in the font of salvation. He made them worthy of receiving the grace of the ineffable Spirit, and of eating the life-giving body and blood of the Lord. But he did not want to occupy the throne of the patriarchate. However, the Angel of God came to great Grigorios and told him: "In your humility do not resist and refuse this, but be brave and accept the twofold eternal honor, for God has bestowed this upon the patriarchate." Thus he accepted the dignity of the patriarchate and went to illuminate the remainder of the Aghuans and the Iberians/Georgians. Arriving in the district of Haband, he taught and counselled [the people] to hold the commandments of the Son of God. There he laid the foundation of a church in the town of Amaras and designated workers and supervisors to construct the church. Then he went to the land of the Armenians where he ordained as his replacement his own son Vrt'ane's, seating him on his patriarchal throne [g123]. [Vrt'ane's] was full of his father's grace and lived according to his teachings. He punished and counselled those he found in the sect of devil-worship, and he rebuked the king's wife for her perverse fornication. Now it happened that when he had entered a church in the district of Taro'n to celebrate the divine liturgy, an enormous multitude of devil-worshipping folk had assembled to kill the venerable Vrt'ane's. This was with the collusion of the king's wife. When [the mob] rushed onto the church porch, they were firmly bound and fettered by the demons at the command of benevolent God. And they all remained thus, stiff-necked and speechless until the venerable one had finished the divine liturgy. Then he came outside and was astonished. Asking what had caused it, [the plotters] confessed their wicked plan and the wishes of the king's wife. [Vrt'anes] prayed and cured all of them by laying on of hands, and advised them not to do evil deeds any longer, but rather to seek mercy in atonement.

[Vrt'ane's] had two sons. One, named Yusik, had a virtuous and saintly manner, and he was also crowned a martyr for his penitential conduct. For when he reached the throne of the patriarchate [g124], which had been his father's, he reproached the king for his sin-loving wickedness. At his order, [Vrt'ane's] was slain with a club, right there in the church. The other [son] was named Grigoris after his grandfather. He was like him in righteous conduct, not marrying after the ways of the world, but rather desiring his patrimonial spiritual inheritance. Already as a lad he schooled himself in Biblical writings and through fasting and prayer he restrained the desires of the flesh and illuminated his soul with loving belief. He quickly received the doublefold honor enjoyed by the celestial prominence of his grandfather, the great Gregory, namely the honor and throne of the patriarchate and the most sublime martyr's crown. The young Grigoris, at the age of fifteen, was ordained bishop of the Iberians/Georgians and the land of the Aghuans. He went and illuminated these two lands and established the Christian faith there. He also constructed churches according to the [clerical] ranks and the cities [*? e"st kargats' and k'aghak'ats'*] and ordained priests, urging everyone to pursue holiness and always commemorate the Saints. Inspired with the desire for Apostolic righteousness, he implemented the commands of the corporeal [g125] Son of God, and circulated among all the pagans, baptizing in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. He taught them to keep all the Lord's commandments and not to take with them [for converting the pagans] gold, silver, copper, not a knapsack nor even a staff.

[15] Warning against all these [material goods], the venerable [Grigoris] took along with him the marvellous and most revered stipend [of all], the honored blood of the great patriarch and martyr Zacharias, John's father, and the relics of Saint Pantaleon who confessed the true faith of Christ and was martyred in the city of Nicomedia.

[Grigoris] brought the most holy relics of the martyrs to the great city of Ts'ri in the principality of the Aghuans. He constructed a small church there and with great care he placed in it a portion of Zacharias'



blood, and some of the remains of Saint Pantaleon. He left a priest named Daniel there as attendant and servant of Christ's martyrs, and then he took his goodly Christ-serving students, and half the relics of Saint Zacharias and of the venerable Pantaleon, and went to the land of the Mask'ut'k', into the presence of Sanesan, king of the Mask'ut'k', who was of the same clan as the Arsacids. [Grigoris] preached the one creative power of the ineffable Trinity, the incarnation of the Word, the many and diverse miracles [g126] [Jesus] performed on the earth, the crucifixion, death, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension of His body into heaven, the second coming to judge the living and the dead. And in the beginning [the Mask'ut'k'] joyfully accepted and believed the word of the gospel.

But the most wicked satan entered their hearts and inflamed them to do evil against the life-giving command of the words of the Lord. They began to make false accusations against the honest teachings of the venerable one. For [Grigoris] sermonized what was the will of benevolent God: not to loot, ravish, or steal, but to rejoice through the labor of one's own hands humanely and happily and to be respectable before God. [The Mask'ut'k'] said: "This is the deceit of the king of the Armenians, for he would block us from looting the land of Armenia. Then how would we survive if we do not loot and plunder?" They also shared their most wicked counsels with the king. Then they seized the lad Grigoris, tied him to the tail of a wild horse and released it in the Vatnean plain. Thus was the blessed one martyred. His students gathered up [his remains] and brought them to the village of Amaras, in the district of Haband. He was placed in a church there close to the altar on the north side. They placed the sacred blood of Zacharias in a glass bottle [g127] and the relics of the venerable Pantaleon in another bottle. Placing both bottles with the most holy remains of the lord Grigoris, they themselves fled to Armenia. For Sanesan was invading Armenia with a countless force of Huns. Divine grace gave the Armenian lords the power to wreak vengeance for the blood of the young Saint Grigoris. The entire multitude of troops were put to the sword, one and all, and there did not remain even a messenger to take the bad tidings to the land of the Mask'ut'k'. Instead, all of them were slain by the swords of their own kinfolk.

[16] In that period the fortified city called Ts'ri rebelled from the king of the Aghuans and gave assistance to the Persian king, and the Argesats'ik' came and captured the city. There they discovered the priest Daniel, whom Saint Grigoris had designated to serve the [relics of the] Saints, and a lad of Chighb [nationality]. [The Chighb] had found the priest and had been baptized a Christian, learning about the faith in Christ and believing it and further studying with the priest. And he had wanted to follow the Christian way.

They put them both into chains and tortured them to make them worshippers of the filthy diabolical ashes [*i. e.* Zoroastrian] [g128]. When they could not forcibly convince them, they entreated the Chighb lad, saying: "You are a man of our land, do our will and we will exalt you in our principality." But the venerable [youth] responded: "It is better that I die before the priest for the name of Christ, than dwell in the midst of sinners." They immediately beheaded them with a sword and thus did they receive the crown of holiness and the prize of victorious martyrdom as had their spiritual father, the young Grigoris. Some Syrian priests took them to a village called Haku, where they were put into a grave. They themselves constructed a monastery over the spot. And they say that the relics of these venerable ones remain there to the present.

This transpired during [the reign of] the valiant Vach'e', king of the Aghuans. The most blessed relics of these venerable ones remained hidden until the reign of the pious Vach'agan the Third, king of the Aghuans, son of Yazdgird, brother of the blessed king Vach'e'. For from the [time of] valiant Vach'agan until Vach'e', there were nine kings of the Aghuans, according to the list. The tenth was the pious, God-loving King Vach'agan, king of the Aghuans [g129].

---

[17]

***List of the names of the succession of rulers who are known from [the time of] Japheth and Ar'an until Vach'agan III.***

Japheth,  
Gomer,  
Tiras,  
Togarmah (T'orgom),  
Hayk,  
Aramaneak,  
Aramayis,  
Amasia,  
Gegham,  
Harma,  
Aram, who lived in the time of Abraham,  
Ara the Handsome, who lived in the time of Isaac,  
Anushawan,  
Pare't,  
Arbak,  
Zawan,  
P'ar'nak Sur, who lived in the time of Joshua,  
Hawnak,  
Vashtak,  
Haykak,  
Ambak,  
Ar'nak,  
Shavarsh,  
Norayr,  
Vstamkar,  
Gor'ak,  
Hrant,  
E"ndzak,  
Dghak,  
Ho'roy,  
Zarmayr,  
Perch, who lived in the time of David,  
Arbun,  
Bazuk,  
Hoy,  
Yusak,  
Kaypak,  
Skayordi, he took the crown from the king of Babylon,  
Paroyr,  
Hrach'eay,  
P'ar'nawaz,  
Pachoych,  
Kor'nak,  
Pawos,  
another Haykak,  
Eruand Sakawakeats' [the Short-lived],  
Tigran.

From this lineage Ar'an was designated as ruler of the Aghuans. But the number of names from Ar'an until the valiant Vach'agan, who was of the great Arsacid family, is not clear, nor can I say accurately from which clan(s) they derived. Those according to the list who were kings of the Aghuans are ten in number, namely:

Vach'agan the Brave,  
Vach'e',  
Ur'nayr,  
Yawch'agan,  
Merhawan,  
Satoy,  
Asay,  
Esvaghe'n,  
Vach'e' [g130],

[18] then the pious Vach'agan, king of the Aghuans, after which there were many God-loving and pious folk in their own time who lived and passed away. But about them we have no [information] such as we have about the pious Vach'agan, king of the Aghuans, who uncovered the blessed and divine hidden treasure [relics]. At the order of Peroz, king of the Persians, Vach'e' constructed the great city of Perozapat, which presently is called Partaw.

---

## 16.

### ***The institutions created by King Vach'agan for the Aghuans as well as his life and deeds and the discovery of the relics of the Saints.***

For thirty years from Vach'e' until the pious Vach'agan, the land of the Aghuanians was kingless. This was because Peroz, the most wicked and impious king of the Persians, who had become furiously enraged like a mad dog, wanted to simultaneously eliminate all the kingdoms of the world, to destroy the churches and uproot the Christian clergy and establish in his realm [g131] Magian idolatry. A great deal of innocent blood of venerable and blessed martyrs of Christ watered the ground at his filthy hands. And an enormous number of innocent folk were killed by the sword of the wicked. Furthermore women and children, sobbing, were captured and taken to a foreign land in bitter slavery. Many lords of the Armenians, Georgians, and Aghuanians were lost to Magian idolatry, some forcibly, others through very grand gifts; and in many places fire-temples (*atrushans*) were established, thereby strengthening fire-worship of the foul gods. Diverse sects of the malicious Satan proliferated and made wretched the unfortunate people of the land of the Aghuanians who were accused of rebellion and punished with fetters and prison and unwillingly forced to submit to Magianism. Among them was Vach'agan who unwillingly accepted Magianism due to the [Iranian] king's violent and fierce wickedness. However [Vach'agan] constantly participated in secret prayers and fasts of the Christian faith, until All-Merciful God visited [humankind] because of the shedding of the blood of Christ's holy martyrs, the destruction of the blessed churches, the senseless killing of old and young, the enslavement [g132] of women and children and the destruction of the souls of the innocent, who were oppressed by Magianism.

[19] He sent the Hephthalite nation as a rod of wrath against the tyrannical and bloodthirsty king of Persia and they struck and killed this impious ruler together with a countless number of his assembled troops. When the blessed Isaiah prophesied in the vision he saw over Babylon, perhaps he referred to this, when he said: "Hark, the giants have come to satisfy my rage; they rejoice as they come and grow hostile. The Lord of hosts has commanded many nations to come from afar. The Lord has come with His armed men. Wail, you impure and wicked generations, for the day of the Lord is near; destruction from God will come upon you [g133].

Therefore all hands will be feeble, and trembling will come upon you like a woman in travail. Behold, the day of the Lord comes cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to render you childless and remove you from the earth. Whoever is caught will fall by the sword. Their infants will be dashed in pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished. Their homes will fill with lamenting and mourning. Wicked son, prepare your children to be punished for the sins of their father. He will fill the world with war, nor will they arise and rule the world again" [Isaiah 13].

Truly this prophecy was fulfilled again on the king of the Persians, the most evil Peroz. For it was at the command of God that the Hephthalites came like giants to satisfy the Lord's anger. First, in front of him, they killed his son, his wicked children [g134], with all the lords and governors of the land and the hosts of his innumerable forces. Then the king himself, that most evil Peroz, was put to the sword and was lost among the countless corpses, and buried in the grave of an ass. Then [the Hephthalites] looted and carried off the immense riches amassed by [the Persian lords] in their wickedness. They raped the women and did not spare the children, and did not pity the orphans. Truly they satiated the Lord's anger and avenged the evils which the wicked Peroz had visited on many peoples. And they did this seven times more upon him.

Then was the Church of God filled with joy, for the wicked offspring of Satan had been seized by their own enemies. They were not stoned to death but killed by the sword, and they died in agony. That same loathesome man and all his evil children were put to the sword and died a cruel and painful death. It was by the will and strength of the Most High that this evil was removed, and that [Peroz] was completely destroyed [g135].

---

## 17.

### ***The enthronement of Vagharshak, and how Vach'agan received his kingdom of Aghuania from him.***

[20] After the evil Peroz had been removed from the world through a miserable death, his father's brother Vagharshak ruled in his stead. The word of the Lord, "whoever performs [the commandments] and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of God" [Matthew 5.19], was implemented by the God-loving King Vach'agan, for he turned from his earlier sinful deeds and then wrought many diverse good deeds, and he converted much of the land from their wicked and diabolical worship to the path of blessed and correct service to God, and through his sincere repentance he added to his virtue. Through his sincere advocacy the lords of his land who had sullied their own spirituality with Magianism and the loathsome worship of [pagan] gods and had corrupted their bodies with filthy prostitution, were led to confessing the truth of Christ. [Vach'agan] taught them, based on Holy Scriptures, that the resurrection of the dead would come at the command [g136] of the Son of God, and that it would come with bitter punishments in undying eternal fire for apostates and unrepentant and evil-doers, but that gifts of everlasting and ineffable glory would come to those who confessed the unknowable Holy Trinity in one godhead and these folk would be rewarded by God in accordance with their good deeds. Those who had been baptized but then had been led astray into Magianism, [Vach'agan] reconfirmed [as Christians] through counsel. As for those who from childhood had followed the path of perdition, he ordered that they be baptized in the font of salvation and become fit to receive the life-giving body and blood of the Son of God. He himself was overjoyed, not so much because of his kingship, but because all the lords of the land, in unity, had conformed to the oath of the Church. For he had heard the life-giving precept which says that whoever turns a soul from the path of error and teaches it the ways of righteousness shall save his own soul from death and atone for the multitude of his own sins.

Every day [Vach'agan] participated in the divine services, and he tirelessly performed memorials for the Saints. He also commanded that the secure land of Artsakh, which was in service to him, should completely abandon [g137] the forms of devil-worship and the various forms of sacrificial offerings to the foul gods. He

was a most benevolent man who brought prosperity, development, and decisive rule to all parts of his kingdom. As for those native princes whom the wicked Peroz had removed from his kingdom, he returned to each his own lordship.

[21] Then the Aghuan lords, each having recovered his own principality, convened and accepted Vach'agan from their own native royal family. He was the son of Yazdgird and brother of King Vach'e' of Aghuania. [Vach'agan] was brave, wise, and prudent, tall of stature and good looking. They took him and made him king at the hands of Vagharshak, king of Persia. When he returned to the land of the Aghuans, he sought for some means to forsake the godless faith of Magianism and to openly practise Christianity as the true confession. God providentially caused Vagharshak, king of the Persians, to issue an order saying that all should hold to their own faiths and that no one should be forced to convert to Magianism. When the good [g138] and pious King Vach'agan heard about this he was overjoyed. Then with many prayers and tears he turned to the Church of God and confessed the eternal and ineffable Holy Trinity. And he greatly entreated the bishops, priests, and cenobites of the Church to share his penitence and prayers to appease all-merciful God. [Vach'agan] himself engaged in fasts, prayers, providing charity to the poor, always considering the example of Peter. The latter, despite his apostasy, was able to become the head of the Apostles, the Keeper of the Gates, and a prince in the Kingdom of Heaven. [King Vach'agan] also recalled that one of the Lord's disciples who disbelieved later on, after confessing the Lord and God, became one of the Apostles. Furthermore, many, many sinners had reached the heights of virtue and became heirs of the beautiful and eternal Kingdom.

The pious king Vach'agan considered all of this and sanctified and cleansed himself in the virtue of true faith by converting to the true God. He also became the physician to many other lands by converting them to the God of all, Jesus Christ. [Vach'agan] freed them from the bitter service [g139] to Satan. For in truth, the wisest among doctors and the most skilled in medicine is the doctor who—when his own body is afflicted with terrible wounds—is able to restore his own health through medicinal herbs. Using the same drugs, he can also bring others who are suffering quickly back to health. It is the same for a sinner who sincerely turns to God and receives the drugs of repentance. The health of his soul may, with the same beneficial drugs of confession and repentance, become the healer and restorer of the souls of others and the one who makes their bodies immortal, by converting them completely to the holy and pure Christian religion.

[King Vach'agan] established punishments and fines to be levied on those who set up [pagan] altars, or made charms (*diwi' hnarests'e'*), or worshipped unclean gods, or not did not keep fully and firmly to the precepts of Christianity. He warned the witches, sorcerers, and pagan priests once and then again that if they should be discovered working such evil, they would be brought to court in painful fetters and with canings and be subjected to the most severe punishment. Some of this numerous group of witches, sorcerers, and pagan priests were strangled, banished, or [g140] enslaved. Many others, through counsel, accepted the Christian faith and began traversing the path of God. In many places [Vach'agan] established bishops, priests, and supervisors. He issued the same strict orders for Kambechan and Aghuania. He established bishops, priests, and deacons. Indeed, throughout the reign of the pious Vach'agan the entire community of the Church was exalted and honored.

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book One

---

[22]

#### 18.

***Establishment by King Vach'agan of royal schools for the evil-born children of sorcerers; the discovery of the unclean sect of finger-cutters and their end.***

Now the God-crowned Vach'agan ordered that the sons of witches, sorcerers, pagan priests, finger-cutters, and poisoners (*degatuats*', "givers of drugs/potions") be assembled and put into schools where they would study Christianity and learn Christian deportment. This was done to firmly establish belief in the Holy Trinity and to correct their immoral national patrimonial cult(s). [Vach'agan] went to the village [where the school was located] in his own private village of R'utak, established stipends, designated a head-master, and ordered them to study Christianity.

When he went there to attend a commemoration for the Saints, he himself would sit in the school house, surrounded by the sons of sorcerers and pagan priests [g141]. He then would command the crowd which had assembled with books and tablets in hand to read aloud in unison. And he was happier than someone who had discovered a great treasure.

He began to inquire into and investigate the wicked sects of the finger-cutters and the poisoners, for both were murderous cults. While he was starting his investigation, humane God willed that the evil sect should be eliminated from the land by this godly king. For as Vach'e' heard, their wickedness in Aghuania had been practised for a long time. Other kings of the Aghuans were either unable to capture them or had not exerted themselves. Furthermore, the accursed and evil Persian *marzpan*s had indeed caught them frequently, but then subsequently released them for bribes.

Now it happened that one day when they were engaged in the evil act of finger-cutting in a cave in a secure wooded area on the bank of the Kur River, a young lad happened to walk along a path close to where they had bound another boy to four stakes by his thumbs and toes and were flaying him alive. Hearing the groaning, this younger boy went in and saw the evil deeds of the murderous [g142] criminals. They chased after him with the intention of seizing him too, but he ran off and dived into the Kur. Now the [fleeing] boy had noticed a tree standing on an island in the middle of the river. He made for it, and climbed up without his pursuers seeing him. He was able to escape and cross the river. But he had recognized those men and he hurried to tell the king all about it.

[23] When the king heard about this, he offered up prayers of thanksgiving to humane Christ and commanded the clergy to fast and pray so that this wicked devil-worship be exposed and eliminated from the land. Satan had such a hold on the minds of his evil satellites [i.e., the finger-cutters] that it was impossible to make any

of the evil men of that sect break their oath. The king ordered the arrest of the men who had been seen committing the murder as well as many other men who were known by reputation [to be associated with the sect], but despite the beatings and other terrible tortures, none of the evildoers could be made to talk. He even commanded that a mixture of scalding vinegar and borax be poured into their ears until their eyes turned white like the moon. But even this did not make them confess.

As we mentioned earlier [g143], it was God Who guided the hand of this king to remove the wicked sect from the kingdom. Consequently, [King Vach'agan] cleverly devised a plan to make them confess. He ordered that all of them be taken to the place of the killing, and selected one who was younger than the rest. He ordered that this man be released. Then [the king] made him a promise that "I will not have you put to death if you confess and honestly tell us the details of this devil-worship." Falling on his face, the young man started to narrate the mysteries of the wicked cult. He said:

The demon appears in the form of a man and orders that three ceremonies (*dask'*) be conducted, each one involving three men. These men are not to be pierced or killed, but while still living the skin and thumb of the right hand is removed and pulled with the skin over the chest to the little finger of the left hand. Then the little finger is cut and broken off inside. The same is done to the feet while the man is still alive. Then he is killed. The skin is removed and placed into a basket.

When the time for the wicked service arrives, a folding chair made of iron is set up. The feet of the chair are in the shape of human feet, as many of us present there saw. Now some valuable garment is placed upon the chair and when the demon arrives, he puts this garment on, and sits on the chair. Then he takes a weapon, and begins to examine the slain man's skin [g144] and fingers. Now if they are unable to procure any [human for sacrifice], [the demon] orders that the bark from a tree be stripped off and that an ox or sheep be sacrificed in front of him. Then he eats and drinks with his evil servitors. A horse, saddled and harnessed, is held ready. Mounting the horse he gallops around until the horse stops by itself. Then [the demon] becomes invisible and disappears. He does this every year.

[24] He pointed out a man and woman who belonged to the evil sect, and then even more people came forward to confirm the same things about the sect. The king then spoke to the man who had related all this to him, saying: "Your life is spared in accordance with the oath I swore. However [I would like you to] do the things you described to those [who perpetrated them] on others." The man performed those acts on many people in the presence of the royal camp. Half of them were taken to their villages and were killed in the same manner, in the presence of their own families. [King Vach'agan] also commanded that many poisoners be seized and killed. That sect had the form of worship in which every year the demon would order a man to be given poison and killed. If it proved impossible to give [the poison] to a stranger, the demon so harassed [the worshipper] that he gave the fatal poison to a member of his own family [g145].

There were still other diabolical sects. [According to one, supposedly,] one demon would cause blindness to those refusing to worship evil while another would give spots [to those refusing to worship]. Should one [member of the sect] betray another, the sorcery of evil demons would bring upon him the afflictions of blindness and spots. The king seized such people and tortured them to death. He also eliminated robbers and other evil-doers from the land of the Aghuans, like a seasoned and virtuous farmer tending his fields with enthusiasm and love, uprooting the thistles and weeds, broadcasting and sowing the good seed to bear fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundred times over. Almighty and merciful God, observing the beauty of the virtuous conduct of this man and the zeal with which he strived to work God's will, bestowed on him the relics of the most holy martyrs in Christ from a place where the spiritual and ineffable treasure was hidden [g146].

***The discovery of the relics of the blessed Zacharias, father of John, and of the blessed Pantaleon who was martyred in the city of Nicomedia, which the young Grigoris had brought to the land of the Chighbs.***

Numerous signs and miracles took place in the city named Ts'ri in that spot where the relics of the holy martyrs in Christ lay, although no one knew precisely where the remains of the Saints were. Despite the fact that the inhabitants of the land were pagans, those with fevers and illnesses went to the church where the relics lay, and took earth from the place. Many of these people, though pagans, were greatly cured nonetheless. The foolish religion of the evil Persians, which was always in opposition to the Church of God [was practised by] a certain Persian mage who came to the place where these relics lay to mock them by relieving himself on them. However, when he loosened his pants his intestines fell out upon the earth, and he died in the greatest agony.

[25] This miracle was related by Yunan, archbishop of the Huns, who was from the land of the Mask'ut'k'. [Yunan] was a very honest man and was himself an eyewitness to the event. Now in Haku lay the relics of the blessed martyrs [g147] the priest of Ts'ri and the Chighb lad who had been beheaded by the Persian Argesats'ik'. Their remains had been taken to Ts'ri. There a man of supremely luminous appearance and a similarly radiant youth appeared at night in a vision to the priest of the monastery named Yakob. They said: "Go to Ts'ri and inform the city's governor, who is a lord from the land of the Aghuans named Xochkorik. We shall show him the same vision [that you are seeing]. We are Saints of the Church. You and he are to remove [our relics]." The priest ignored this. However the same vision was repeated to him a second and a third time. He continued to ignore it until he fell seriously ill and was close to death. Then those same men in the forms of splendid luminous angels returned again and said to the priest: "Do you know why you are dying?" He replied: "No, lords." They said: "It is because you are stubborn and disobedient. You would not go to Xochkorik in Ts'ri and retrieve our relics. And lo, now you lay dying!"

The priest begged them to cure him so that he might quickly go and fulfill their order. They put their hands on him, and he was cured at once. He got up and went to the city of Ts'ri. He located Xochkorik who was administrator in [g148] the city who asked him no questions and received him like a man of God. The man in the vision had told him that Xochkorik would also see a vision, and so the priest did not make explanations. After eating they got up, the priest going to sleep in the church with two other priests who were with the governor [Xochkorik], while Xochkorik himself went to sleep attended by two servants. Those same men appeared in their awe-inspiring shape and said to Xochkorik: "Get up and go to the church, for the Saints are there. You and the [other] priest must gather them up and remove them." [Xochkorik] awoke and was told: "Hurry, this is a vision." However, he fell back to sleep again. The vision returned. [The men in the vision] said: "We are not speaking solely that you get up early, but for the sake of our relics which are in that church. You and the priest must go and fetch them."

[26] He awoke in an awful fright, but soon he fell back into sweet sleep again. A third time those men who were clothed in light and who possessed the most glorious and beautiful forms reappeared and told him: "Get up and go to the church. There you will see a great light burning. Notice where the light shines, for there lie the relics of the Saints." This same vision [g149] appeared at the same time to the priest who got up and met Xochkorik who came to tell him about his own vision. They met, explained why they had arisen and told each other about their visions. Then the priest Yakob and the lord named Xochkorik, together with the two priests attached to the governor and the two servants, went to the church, crossing themselves. After they had entered the porch near the bema and had prayed before the Cross, they saw the most amazing bright light in the church. The light was so overwhelming that they were unable to get to their feet. Even after singing a psalm or two they were unable to get up. When they had sung a third psalm, however, Almighty God helped them, and it was as though someone had put them on their feet. They crossed themselves and went farther into the church which was now filled with the brightest, most glorious light. There they prayed until morning. At dawn, all the light in the church concentrated over the place where the most blessed relics of the venerable



martyrs [g150] of Christ lay. As the light died down, a light flickered on and off above the spot until they were able to see just where it was. They opened it and found the Saints' relics. There was an inscription on the vessel containing the relics which read: "I, Grigoris, brought these Saints, Zacharias, father of John, and the venerable Pantaleon, who was martyred in the city of Nicomedia. And then I myself died." They removed the Saints' relics, washed and anointed them with holy oil. Xochkorik sealed them with his own ring, then rode off on his horse to take the message to the pious king Vach'agan, informing him of the discovery of these great relics.

The pious king was overjoyed and rejoiced and stood in prayer for the graciousness of God, giving thanks for this great blessing bestowed upon him.

Then he assembled bishops, monks, and hermits, and conducted a grand memorial service for the Saints. Alms were generously given to the poor. He dressed the bishops and priests in honorable vestments and sent Manase', his very devoted court priest, with other officials to quickly [g151] bring the holy relics of the most blessed martyrs. When they had arrived, the king, the queen, and numerous officials went on foot to meet them. They were accompanied by the Cross, incense, many flowers, and a countless multitude of people. The king blessed and glorified Jesus Christ the true God through these virtuous and holy martyrs.

[27] After this the king adorned the reliquary of the Saints with diverse royal garments, gold, silver, precious stones, and ordered that a folding wooden altar be constructed and covered in red leather. [He also ordered that] white linen be prepared to embellish the inside of the resting place of the Saints and all the Gospels. Shushanik, queen of the Aghuans, a pious and benevolent woman, ordered that her great pavilion be erected over the red altar of the Saints to form a church into which the officials and the king and many people might enter and be sheltered from the heat and kept dry in case of rain. A linen screen was erected around the pavilion to form an enclosure which the king's retinue might enter at the time of the service [g152] and worship and pray to God and hear the holy scriptures before the Holy Cross and the blessed martyrs in Christ.

Since the king always took these relics around with him when he traveled, he ordered litters to be made in their name and to be decorated again with red leather and precious white linen and a cross of gold set with precious gems and the king's name carved in gold and attached to the litter. There were crosses embroidered with multi-hued silks which glittered from the royal crown. Choice white horses from the royal stables which the king was fond of and treasured had their tails dyed red [for this occasion]. Officers were designated to attend to the litter of the Saints and the horses. Apart from the Saints, the Gospel, and other Scriptural writings, nothing else was permitted in the litter. White oxen were yoked to the vehicle which carried the altar of the Saints. [King Vach'agan] appointed many of the court priests, deacons, readers, and psalmists to rever and tend to the Saints day and night. When the camp started to move [g153], the litter with the Saints was at the front. It was covered with white linen and surmounted with a gold cross and a royal crown woven in multi-hued silks. [It was accompanied by] royal white horses decorated in red silk and with regal crowns on their heads. There was a multitude of servitors in front and behind, crosses in hand, singing psalms and hymns in unison praising the power of the Holy Trinity.

This procession was followed by the palanquin of the queen, which was followed by the queen's entourage. Now when they wanted to encamp, first they erected the red altar with the gold cross on top, which was for the Saints. A large white tent was placed over this. With great care and accompanied by fragrant incense, they then brought in the Saints to rest there. Next the royal tent and other arrangements for the king were seen to. Then the king himself together with the queen and the entire army performed morning and evening prayers glorifying the Saints. Now it happened that this God-loving and pious king lacked a male heir. Making a vow before the monks, [King Vach'agan] beseeched God through the intercession of the Saints to grant him a son. And benevolent God [g154], the giver of good things heard his prayers and bestowed a son on him. With joy did he receive this gift from God, delivered to him by the agency of the blessed martyrs. [Vach'agan] named the boy Pantaleon and commanded that he be raised with a fear of God and always be zealous in worshipping the holy martyrs of Christ.

[28] When the benevolent king sat down to supper he ordered that a jug from the royal vessels be filled so that he might drink wine, and that two large silver tables bearing the royal bread always be placed across from his table. A deacon stood at the foot of the royal table to take portions of whatever dishes were put there and to put them on the other tables. When the royal meal had ended the deacon took these foods and distributed them to the poor. Every Sunday when they performed the divine mass and the life-giving words [of Scripture] were read aloud before the entire assembly the king did not go empty-handed before the Gospel. Indeed, he was ever focused on his fear of Christ and enthusiastically participated in fasts and prayers together with the queen and all the court and untiringly [g155] commemorated the Saints urging all to belief in Christ. Constantly rejoicing, he grew ever stronger in the hope of Christ and in His eternal goodness.

---

## 20.

### ***The discovery of the relics of the blessed youth Grigoris, who had been martyred in the presence of King Sane'san of the Masgut'k'.***

Vach'agan, the pious king of the Aghuans, greatly longed to uncover the relics of the lad Saint Grigoris since he had been informed from the events in history that the venerable Grigoris had been martyred in the Vatnean plain by the shore of the great sea, and that some of his students had brought [his body] and placed it in the church which the great Gregory [the Illuminator] had built in the village of Amaras. There was no marking on that spot either because they feared that someone might take the relics of the venerable Saint, or from fear of bandits or because the exact location had been forgotten after the passage of so much time [g156].

[29] The king consulted with his court priests about how to discover the remains of such a desirable and goodly figure. Summoning the abbot of the village he asked whether or not there were any indications [of where the grave might be located] in the church cemetery. [The abbot] replied that there were now many graves in the vicinity of the church and that since the period of the [Iranian] raids and the main foundation of the church, no one had been able to build upon that which the great Gregory had founded. The king proclaimed: "I command that the ground be excavated so that perhaps in the midst of so many graves we shall come upon the grave of the most holy venerable one. We must now place our trust in fasting and prayers and many pleas to All-merciful God, remembering the word of the Lord that a good request is quickly accepted by our generous God."

---

## 21.

### ***King Vach'agan's letter to all the bishops and priests asking that, through their prayers, the hidden treasure might be revealed to him.***

The king then ordered that a letter [g157] like this be sent throughout the lands under his sway: "To all the clergy—the bishops, priests, and monks—greetings. I ask you to worship and fast and to beseech humane God that the relics of the venerable Grigoris be bestowed upon us. Be well."

At this, all the bishops assembled the priests, deacons, and clergy under their jurisdictions and carrying the Lord's Cross, they quickly and unitedly gathered at the king's own personal village called Diwtakan. Great punishment was stipulated for those who delayed. [At Diwtakan] they greatly celebrated the memory of the Saints for three days. Now the king had a custom of standing and paying homage to the entire clergy which had assembled there. He had located the most holy relics of Gregory and the most celebrated Hr'ip'sime' and Gayane' at Darahoj village in the state of Artsakh which a priest named Matt'e' had brought from the Armenian *kat'oghikos* Yovanne's Mandakuni [A.D. 478-490], and which [reliquaries] had been sealed by his

ring. [King Vach'agan] sent for these relics and had them brought to him. When [the relics of] great Gregory arrived at the great assembly at Diwtakan, together with his comrades in martyrdom Hr'ip'sime' and Gayane' [g158], the king, queen, and all the grandee lords traveled a good distance out from the village to meet them. In front went the bishops with their entire retinues of clerics and servitors, group by group, brigade by brigade. Each brigade bore aloft the venerable relics of the Saints together with the Gospel and numerous crosses and various banners. The smoke of fragrant incense rose thickly from the celebrants and was accompanied by the sweet sound of psalms and spiritual songs continually praising God, bestower of the greatest gift of all.

[30] Thus did the king with the greatest joy greet the Saints along with the crowd. The king himself solicitously attended the priest who carried the relics. Bringing them to the resting place of the Saints, he placed them with [the remains of the] venerable Zacharias and Pantaleon. Then the benevolent king trusted in the firm faith and virtuousness of the people and declared: "Now I am certain that through the intercession of the great Gregory, God will grant me the most holy relics of [Gregory's grandson] the blessed Grigoris."

The king then took the multitude of the most blessed assembly and ordered all the bishops [g159] with the priests, deacons, hermits, and the entire clergy of the Church with their own servitors, each rank carrying Gospels and many crosses and incense censers. The king walked with the priests of the royal court and many servants. Now it was springtime and rain was pouring down on them. The king, therefore, wanted to leave the queen behind. However, she would not consent to this and she too, with a zealous desire, went to look for the Saints. They took along with them the five holy martyrs of Christ, that is, the great Gregory, the venerable Zacharias, the most blessed Pantaleon, and the most renowned and victorious combatants Hr'ip'sime' and Gayane' to intercede with great and all-powerful God so that through them his request would be fulfilled.

The relics of the Saints, wrapped in various royal garments and accompanied by much incense and diverse fragrant flowers, were placed in the litter of the Saints which was covered with red leather decorated with white linen over it. A gold cross adorned with precious stones was attached to the top of the litter. There were white horses with their tails dyed red [g160] and royal horses wearing crowns. The multitude of the servants of the royal court went before and behind this litter carrying crosses and worshipping and praising God with sweet-voices day and night without stop. The king himself walked alongside the litter singing along with the psalms of blessing. The ranks of the bishops, each one accompanied by a large crowd of people, walked at the four corners of the Saints' litter singing psalms and praising the Only-Begotten God and requesting what they all desired, the blessed relics of Saint Grigoris.

[31] King Vach'agan together with the bishops ordered that no one should eat anything until evening, and then that they should only fortify themselves with a small amount of bread. The king himself followed this regime until the discovery of the Saints. The royal court priests fasted very zealously and beseeched benevolent God. Indeed, there were some who did not eat anything until the remains of the Saints were discovered. Day and night the entire assembly prayed without cease and fervently and loudly called upon God seeking Grigoris whom they all desired. Then the pious King Vach'agan convened a meeting and for an extended time [g161] they prayed for the relics of the venerable Grigoris.

During these days the king sent the priest of Darahoj, Matt'e', with some servitors to Suhar' to hold a service and celebrate mass in the name of the Saints who had been discovered there. Now while they were performing the morning service the priest Matt'e' fell asleep. He heard a loud voice that said: "Look for Saint Grigoris to the east [of the church]." This indeed turned out to be true. First, however, they mistakenly began digging in the cemetery to the north of the church. But subsequently they uncovered the most blessed relics of the venerable one, just as the voice had told them.

At this point the king came from Diwtakan with a large number of the assembly, the bishops, priests, the servitors, with the entire congregation fasting, praying, and beseeching benevolent God, as we have described. They reached the village named Arazhank'. It was here that a deacon of the royal court by the

name of Yove'l had a vision before dawn in which he saw himself with a spade on his shoulder searching for the remains of the blessed Grigoris. And then Grigoris himself appeared to the man as a monk wearing a white garment. [Grigoris] asked the deacon [g162]: "What are you looking for?" [Yove'l] replied: "[All of us], the king and all the servitors with the entire brigade of the Aghuans are looking for [the grave of] Grigoris, but we cannot find it." The venerable one took the deacon by the hand and bowed toward the spot where the Saint's remains were buried. He said: "If you are looking for Grigoris, he is there." And he ordered him to dig in that place in the cemetery where there was a small hill surmounted by a cross. The venerable one went onto the hill and stood by the cross. A priest by the name of Nat'an, who was the deacon's brother, and another priest named Gideon (Gedewon) began to dig there. Yove'l, who was on his knees, had a sack in front of him. They had found the relics and were departing in great joy. But just then [Grigoris] called after them: "My ribs and feet are still here. Take them too." And we found [the parts] he mentioned. Waking up, [Yove'l] related his vision to the king. Even though the deacon had never been to Amaras, he said: "I will know the spot he showed me."

[32] At this, the king was overjoyed. He sent Manase', his court priest, together with the same deacon [Yove'l] to Amaras in advance of his own journey there. When they arrived there, the deacon pointed out the spot where they had found the relics of the Saint. Then [the royal entourage, including] the relics of Saint Zacharias and the venerable Pantaleon [g163], blessed Gregory, the renowned warriors Hr'ip'sime' and Gayane', the king himself, the great assemblage with the bishops, priests, and servitors set out from Arazhank' and arrived at the tiny village of K'arue'ch. A morning service was celebrated there. Here too that same deacon Yove'l had another vision in which four older monks and Grigoris who was the youngest stood around that very place where he had been commanded to dig. In awe the deacon fell on his face, but when he arose and wanted to question [the apparitions], they disappeared. The morning service began that day and the pious king ceaselessly prayed to God for the discovery of the blessed Grigoris, crossing himself with the Lord's sign, and from the innermost depths of his heart greatly beseeching generous God.

---

### *The vision of the venerable Vach'agan.*

While seated at evening service, the king took a little nap. Then a voice said to him: "That which you are pleading for is here revealed to you." In this vision he heard the voice [g164] say: "I shall go to Amaras and appear to a certain man there." It was then that he sent his court priest Manase' to go to Amaras ahead of him. [The king] said to him: "Do not reveal my vision to anyone." He also asked if anyone else had seen anything. A priest [also] named Yove'l who was a hermit and was near the king said: "In the same place where the deacon Yove'l was commanded to dig, I saw a fountain emerge from a very small stream and gush strongly. I was amazed since previously no fountain had been there. Where did it come from?" When they had set out from the village of K'arue'ch, women from the village capital of Amaras came before them. As we have mentioned, it was springtime and endless, unceasing torrents of rain poured down on the earth, and the horses' gait was difficult on the road. The king declared: "Let there be no delay." In his zeal for what he desired [the king] got down from his horse and began to circulate among the orders of bishops and priests, arranging matters and reducing the slowness, and encouraging them to praise the life-giving Trinity with sweet voices singing psalms. The king, with the greatest solicitousness, personally ministered to the litter carrying the relics of the venerable martyrs of Christ [g165]. The earth resounded with the sound of worship in a variety of tongues, as though it were covered with a luminous cloud made of crosses, with multi-coloured shapes decorated with banners and flags, and precious stones set in numerous shining gold and silver crosses.

[33] The litter of the Saints, covered in white, was drawn by a white horse and bore a golden cross adorned with precious gems and the priceless crown with its banners on the cross which shone like a star, went first [in the procession] in glory and splendour in the midst of the Christian army. Now when the blessed God-loving assembly entered the village a small river was seen to flow through the settlement and a bridge had been built over it on the royal route. The king, because of his great love for the Saints, would not leave [care of] the

litter to anyone else. Instead, he personally dismounted and took it with him as he crossed the river, wearing his royal garments. When they reached the designated place, the king with the bishops and the entire multitude knelt in prayer for a long time so that they would achieve what they sought. Pitching a royal tent over the spot [the king] commanded that it be guarded carefully until [g166] the morning. Now it happened that at that time there was no bishop at Amaras, so they asked the priest at the village monastery and other senior folk whether or not they had seen anything there. They related what they had heard from the hermit Job.

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book One

---

[34]

#### 22.

*The venerable monk Job converts the very large district of Parskank' in Artsakh.*

The abbot of the monastery responded:

"There was a priest in Vekert named Job, a hermit with virtuous deportment, who possessed Apostolic gifts. He converted from their error [the people residing in] a large area of Artsakh called Parskank', teaching them to know God and to worship the unknowable mystery of the Holy Trinity. He came and many times honored the memory of St. Grigoris, and told the multitude two or three times that a believing [Christian] king would arise in the land of Aghuania who would seek the site of the holy relics [g167] of Grigoris. Now it came about that on another occasion, a hermit visited us as a guest and we welcomed him as is the custom among brothers. We washed his feet, gave him a little to eat, and he went and fell asleep in that same place. Suddenly he arose, took his cross, and erected it on that spot. He commanded us, saying: 'Let no one remove this cross. Rather, put up a larger one right here, perform morning and evening prayers and burn incense before it, for I forsee great miracles associated with this place.'

Now it so happened that yet another monk came to us as a guest. We ordered that he be served a meal. While he was eating and being served wine in a goblet by a lad, there was a disturbance in the village. We all left the guest alone and went to see what the noise was about. The guest, meanwhile, arose, took the goblet, and left. He took and sold the goblet, using the money as a stipend to enter school. Then the thief of the goblet saw a vision in which a bishop, dressed in white and with a very frightening mien, was seated on a chair by the cross which had been erected by the hermit. The bishop stripped and bound him and ordered that he be tortured over the grave of the Saint. When he woke up, he showed many people his body which was covered with black and blue marks [g168] from that severe beating. [The bishop] ordered that he be punished in this manner day after day. Then [the thief] travelled to the blessed city of Jerusalem seeking a cure for the brutal torture.

[35] But again, even in this place, he saw that same bishop who ordered that he be punished even more severely. [The bishop told him]: 'There will be no relief from these torments until you go to the very place whence you stole the goblet and confess.' The monk arose and took with him the price of the goblet. He left Jerusalem, travelled back to Amaras, entered the church, called the abbot and, in tears, began to confess his misdeeds. Greatly beseeching [the abbot for forgiveness], he paid him the price [of the goblet]. He pointed at the place where the cross stood

and said: 'That is where the bishop sat in radiant garments and with a frightful visage.' And he showed them where the grave was, saying: 'That is where he ordered me to dig.' Cured of his torments, he went on his way in peace. They say that many folk in the village who are childless come there as a place of pilgrimage, take some soil from the spot, and afterwards become parents. Similarly people with fevers who took some of the soil were cured at once."

While all these miracles were being narrated to the king, there was another development [g169].

---

## 23.

***In the same assembly Xochkorik, the illegitimate son of the Aghuanian king Esuaghe'n, who had been appointed a governor, narrates to the king a vision he had.***

The man named Xochkorik, to whom the venerable Zacharias and the blessed Pantaleon appeared in Ts'r'i, fell asleep at midday. In a vision he saw seven men in the church all dressed in splendid white robes. [Xochkorik] spoke with these monks, saying: "Blessed men, while you are here why not disclose to us the place where the relics of Saint Grigoris rest? Some say they are here and others there, and we are worried and unhappy over it." They all replied: "Did you ever see a miracle?" [Xochkorik] said that he had not. Then one of the seven went in front of him saying: "Follow me and I shall show you the place you speak of." And he led him to the aforementioned spot. [Xochkorik] said: "I saw the earth split apart and a torch light was shining through the crack. This light divided into two parts and fragrance wafted up." To the monk who had shown him this sign he said: "I will go now and tell the king what you have shown me [g170]." The monk responded: "Go and tell him." [Xochkorik] approached the court where it happened that the king was asleep and he dared not rouse him.

[36] [Xochkorik] returned to that man and said: "The king sleeps and I do not dare rouse him." Now the earth was still split apart as it had been and the torch light was still glowing and the monk was standing by. The latter said: "When the king wakes up, tell him what you have seen." [The monk] also wanted to cover up the crack with his foot and extinguish the lamp, but Xochkorik thrust out his hand to prevent this, [saying]: "Do not do this until the king has seen it." But the monk would not agree and, kicking the ground with his foot, he made the crack disappear. Then he said: "When the king awakes, tell him what you have seen." Now that man awoke and went and told everything to the king. Then the entire assembled multitude prayed ceaselessly to God, the bestower of all good things. The following day when the morning services were being performed everyone assembled at the site of the miraculous cross. A royal tent was pitched over the spot [g171] and a screen was placed around the tent at some distance. Beyond this enclosure stood the assembly of bishops and their students, the deacons cross in hand, priests carrying the Gospel, and servitors with censers wafting various fragrant incenses. The earth resounded with the singing in unison of psalms and hymns of praise to the ineffable Trinity.

The virtuous king removed some garments, took the spade in hand, and began to dig boldly. The benevolent and very believing queen descended into the pit in her royal robes and hauled soil away zealously. The bishops, priests, lords and the lords' wives all dressed in their finery took the earth outside with great diligence. Now it happened that they mistakenly began to dig on the wrong side, while the venerable relics lay to their east.

Great sorrow descended upon the king and the entire entourage and the unhappy king sat there grieving. Then, encouraged by true faith, the king declared: "The word of the living God is unerring. To two or three [folk] who gather together in the name of the Savior a request for a good thing is granted at once [Matt. 18. 20]. Behold, such [g172] an assembly is now gathered in the most holy name of the God of all. I know for certain that He will heed us and not reject us to depart in shame." Then [the king] commanded that [the relics

of] the blessed Zacharias, the most holy Pantaleon, the great and renowned Gregory with Hr'ip'sime' and Gayane' be brought and placed by the digging. At this point a man suddenly took his shovel and began to dig to the east of the spot he had just abandoned. And the most blessed grave of the venerable man was revealed. The king and those inside the tent were overwhelmed with joy.

[37] The multitude of those assembled were informed about the discovery of the Saint's relics and the entire crowd surged toward the relics and almost trampled the screen and the tent. However at that point the king emerged and was able to restrain them, but just barely. Now when the grave had been opened and the relics were uncovered, a sweet fragrance came forth which covered all of them with the scent of many different incenses and numbed them for many hours. The king and everyone with him were astonished and in unison they praised the one who accomplished such amazing things. The king sat on the ground near the grave [g173] and ordered that various precious court vessels should be brought there. He put the casket on his knees and worshipped in great reverence. Then priests brought the remains and put all of them into the casket which the king was holding. They also discovered two glass bottles with the Saint's relics. One contained the blood of Zacharias, and the other held the remains of Saint Pantaleon. Removing everything [from the grave] the multitude worshipped them until nighttime. Then the king sealed them with the royal seal and ordered that they be carefully watched over until morning. They also discovered a drinking glass which had belonged to Gregoris himself. The king took this and greatly rejoiced over the many gifts which Almighty God had bestowed upon him.

The following day [the king] ordered that his robe should be placed on the ground and that golden vessels and sweet wine should be brought. He commanded that the relics be washed in it and placed on his robe in the sun.

Now it happened that a monk from Amaras monastery stole a portion of the relics and departed. But then Grigoris in great glory appeared in a vision to another person disclosing the monk's name and his theft. At the king's command he confessed and brought back what he had stolen. Then one of the men from among the stone haulers grew discontent and began to curse [g174] Grigoris, the martyr of Christ, saying: "We have chosen that Grigoris as our anti-Christ!" Immediately punishment from God was visited upon him. He fell to the ground, his head was turned back to front. And he stayed that way for many days until he went and took earth from the Saint's grave. He wept a great deal, was healed, and his misdeeds were forgiven. At this, great awe came over the workmen and the supervisors who quickly and with fear continued the work of building a blessed church.

[38] The king ordered that a portion of the relics be given to each of the bishops to distribute among their dioceses, while the largest share was to remain in Amaras. With great care he himself placed the remainder in different vessels and then sealed them with his ring. He ordered that the foundations of a chapel should be dug over the grave and that [the chapel] be finished quickly and named in honor of Saint Grigoris. Then the king stood in earnest prayer, and respected the bishops and the entire multitude in great joy to the sound of the sweet singing of many psalms in praise of God. He arose from the camp and on the third [g175] night, as the fourth day was about to dawn, they celebrated mass and the Lord's ineffable mystery.

Then the entire camp began to depart, in the same order as before, accompanying the ranks of the Saints. Thus did the pious King Vach'agan acquire the spiritual and other-wordly booty which is the source of permanent and unrelatable goodness. No king before him, none of his ancestors, had ever received such marvellous gifts. The Christian camp also received a portion, thereby gaining indescribable riches from the mercy of God through King Vach'agan. I do not regard him as any less worthy of praise than Emperor Constantine who ruled in the West or the Arsacid Trdat who found salvation for Greater Armenia, since this blessed man did the same thing for us Easterners. He was the door to the light of knowledge of God, the model of many virtues. He who had travelled far for this ceremony returned along the road which had been prepared for his coming, and his grandeur made the road seem to be as good or even better than it had been before.



As they departed, the king went on foot, and the whole procession walked along with quiet, slow steps, like water [g176] flowing to a calm sea. The air itself rejoiced with harmonious sounds and glittering reflections. Even the angels sang in accompaniment, and it was as if the earth had become heaven. The king, laboring untiringly, led everyone across the river as he had done on the way to the place. He ordered the litter of the Saints to be halted.

The king sat with the whole congregation. Then the bishops blessed the diverse crowd of people and ordered them to return to their homes; the king led the ranks of bishops and priests and other honored men and the Saints to K'arue'ch and a place to rest, where he thanked them all and said a prayer on behalf of those who had come at his command and helped him in his quest. "Eternal praise and glory to Christ," he said, "Who, by the intercession [of the Saints] and by your prayers, has granted you and me that which we desired." They all blessed the king and the queen and the entire court in unison, saying: "May everything that you ask of God be granted to you through the intercession of Saint Grigoris, and may He grant us to live with you for many days in peace on earth and to make the Church more glorious by our daily [g177] increasing zeal. May our Savior Christ and His heavenly Father seal your death by your confession of Christ." The king took with him the senior chief bishop Shup'haghishoy, and whenever the litter of the Saints arrived in a village, he would dismount and tend to the Saints on foot until he had led them through the village—not as a monarch who had become proud and lazy in luxury, but as a man knowledgeable and learned in Christian doctrine, not as one trapped in the tomb of pleasure, but one who diligently and intelligently submits to the commandments of God.

[39] When all this had happened and the renown of Saint Grigoris had spread everywhere in the district of Uti, men and women, young and old from whichever village the Saints were about to enter came out to meet them, and countless multitudes came joyfully from distant villages bearing crosses and many flowers and sweet incense, and ceaselessly glorified and blessed the united Holy Trinity.

Thus did they reach the king's own village of Diwtakan. There they laid [the relics] to rest performing a great memorial service for them. The king ordered that the relics of the Saints should be anointed with precious oil [g178].

[King Vach'agan] had a daughter named Xnch'ik who was still a girl and much beloved by the king. He had built an estate (*dastakert*) in her name and gave her a portion of the Saints' relics and this was celebrated in that *dastakert* with a great ceremony of remembrance. [The king] himself took a portion of the relics and those of Saint Zacharias, and always had them with him as he circulated around with the camp. As for the remainder of the relics, he sealed them and had them kept with the greatest watchfulness in a blessed and noble chamber until the chapel in the name of Pantaleon was constructed in Diwtakan and the Saint moved there and greatly honored. He left there the priests, deacons, and the brigade of numerous servitors and personally performed memorial services for the Saints, three times a day for three days at that place. He was tireless in fasts, prayers, and giving alms to the poor. He ordered those who had received portions of the relics to celebrate memorial services in honor of the Saints, and he reminded those who might be remiss of the terrible judgement of God. As for those who were zealous, [he reminded them] of the unknowable gifts of [God's] goodness. Thus does God glorify His Saints [g179].

---

## 24.

***The question King Vach'agan of the Aghuans put to the learned priest Matt'e'.***

See next entry.

---

***The letter from the blessed Abraham, bishop of the Mamikoneans, to Vach'agan, king of Aghuania, concerning the dead.***

We omit the translation of these chapters [pp. g180-g183], which deal with spiritual and doctrinal matters. C. J. F. Dowsett's fine translation of chapters 24 and 25 is available [here](#).

---

[40]

***The canons of Vach'agan, king of the Aghuans, issued at the assembly at Aghue'n.***

During the reign of Vach'agan, king of the Aghuans, many disputes arose among the laity [g183], bishops, priests, chorepiscopi, nobles (*azats*) and the common folk, as a result of which the king wanted to convene a large general assembly, [and he did this] on the 13th day of the month of Mareri at Aghue'n.

I, Vach'agan, king of the Aghuans, with Shup'haghisoy, archbishop of Partaw, Manase' bishop of Kapaghay, Yunan, bishop of Hashu, Anania and Sahak and P'od bishop of Uti, Yovsep', priest of Kaghankatuk', Mat'e, priest of Partaw, T'omay, priest of the royal court, Po'ghos, priest of Gayeguch, Shmawon, chorepiscopus of Ts'r'i, Mat'e, priest of Darahoch, Abikaz, priest of Bed, Urbat'ayr, priest of Manushay, Yove'l and Parmide' and Yakob, priests, and the nobility and clan-heads (*nahapetk'*) of Artsakh, Bakur clan-head of Kaghankatuk', and many others who have gathered in my presence in my summer place at Aghue'n have so stipulated that:

1. Priests in the villages must pay homage to [their] bishop twice annually. They shall learn the spiritual rules from him according to Scripture, and in accordance with the rule, they shall give the bishop a yearly gift.

2. When priests and deacons are ordained, the priest must pay four *drams* and the deacon, two [g184].

3. Nobles and members of royalty during their lifetimes should personally give a saddled and harnessed horse and whatever else they can give for their souls. Should [such a one] not do this during his lifetime, then after his death his family should give.

[41] 4. Let this be the rule for fruits [grown by] the people and given to the priest: 4 bushels (*grw*) of wheat, 6 of barley, and 16 jugs of sweet [wine] [should be given by the well-off farmer]; the poor shall give half a loaf of bread and as much wine as he can; let nothing be taken from him who has no field or vineyard. Now those who for the sake of their soul give in excess of this do well; as Paul says, "he who sows abundantly, shall reap abundantly" [Gal. 6. 7]. He who has sheep shall give one sheep, three fleeces and one cheese from his household; he who has horses shall give one foal; and he who has cattle, one calf.

5. A noble, peasant, or other layman should not avoid an annual giving in memory of the dead. They should give as much as they are able. The dead must not be deprived of a share of their gain. If the deceased had horses, then the Church should be given a horse of the type he himself would have desired; if he had oxen, then an ox he himself would have desired.

6. If an abbot or a monk should misbehave in the monastery and if this should be discovered, he shall be disrespected, expelled, and his property shall be confiscated by the Church [g185].

7. If the priests of a monastery are many and their congregation few while another monastery has a large congregation but few monks, then let them take from the large congregation and give it to the monastery with few monks.

8. A Christian who fights and sheds blood should be brought before the bishop and punished in accordance with the laws.

9. A priest who tends to a large village should not also administer to another village. If two hamlets are near to one another, one priest may minister to both of them. A priest may shepherd to as many folk as he is able.

10. A man may not marry a woman related to him in the third degree [of consanguinity (i.e., sharing a grandparent)]. He may not marry his brother's wife.

[42] 11. A man who abandons his wife without cause, or lives with a woman out of wedlock, or who is lawless or a murderer, or visits seers should be taken to the royal court bound, and put to a wicked death.

12. As for those who mourn for the dead excessively: let the head of the household (*tanute'r*) and the minstrels be bound and taken to the royal court and punished. Let their families not dare to mourn thereafter.

13. Those who eat carrion or eat meat during Lent or work on Sunday [g186] and do not go to church should be punished by the priest and the congregation.

14. Those who eat meat on the Wednesday and Friday before Lent must fast for one week. Should someone go to the priest and say that such a person is not complying [with this penance], then let the village elder expropriate an ox from this person and give it to the priest.

15. If a lay person makes accusation against a priest or deacon and they confess to its accuracy, let the bishop judge them, and let them atone in a retreat. Should they not confess, however, and that which the others say against them is obviously true, they are to be punished in accordance with the canons and driven from the village. If the crime is not evident, the priest is to be commanded to celebrate a mass, which shall be taken as his oath.

16. If a priest is accused of a crime by his colleagues and students and they themselves are reliable, the priest must stand before the altar and his accusers before the congregation, and he shall be taken from the sanctuary and driven from the village. Should his colleagues and students bear a grudge against him and it be known to the congregation that they have quarrelled, the priest is to celebrate a mass and the congregation is to drive the others out and curse them. If they confess that they spoke falsely they are to be made to repent [g187] and are not to be driven out of the monastery. But later on, if they should cause any further mischief, let them be punished in accordance with the canons.

[43] 17. If the bishops and priests complain to the king about nobles who, they said, built two or three churches or monasteries in a single village, and the nobles made an agreement before the king; it was considered fitting by the king, the bishops, and the nobles that the churches which had been built should remain, and that the produce and income of these should be given to the senior (*vsam*) church.

18. The nobles who pay tithes are to give half to the principal (*bun*) church and half to their own church.

19. On Sundays both master and servant are to go to the senior church to pray and offer memorial services in the church. A stranger must pay soul-scot to the church.

20. Nobles, regarding [the clerics on] their estates, must not dare to remove or appoint a priest without the bishop's approval. And if a priest is threatened by a noble or the congregation, let him not leave without the bishop's approval.

21. Should a nobleman construct an altar in his church or put relics there or have mass performed there, it should be done with the bishop's consent, to the extent [g188] that this is possible. When it is undertaken and done by order [of the bishop] then it is blessed. When not done this way, let [the perpetrator] be expelled from the church and let him pay a fine to the bishop in accordance with his ability. But after he has paid the amount stipulated by canon, he shall be blessed.

22. The bishops, priests, and nobles made this agreement in the presence of the king. May the king and queen and their children be blessed by the bishops and priests and the Church, and may all the participants in this council be blessed. These ordinances were sealed by Mutsik, the king's chancellor (*hramanatar*), Mirho'rik, the steward (*hazarapet*), the heads of clans (*azgapetk'*) Marut', Tirazd, Sparakos, Shama, Bakur, Ar'atan, Arch'e's, Vardan the Brave, lord of Gardman, Xurs, Germanosan, Xoske'n, P'irog, patriarch (*nahapet*) all the nobles of Aghuania. As additional confirmation of this document, Vach'agan, king of Aghuania, stamped it with his signet ring.

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book One

---

[44]

27.

#### *Narrative history about Saint Mesrop and his companions.*

After the martyrdom of Aghuania's *kat'oghikos* Grigoris [g189], the barbarian peoples of the eastern areas again fell into pagan idol-worship, making many vows in their fire-temples, and persecuting Christians. [Mesrop, who] was one of the first doctors of the Church (*vardapet*), by the grace of the Holy Spirit invented alphabets for three peoples, namely the Armenians, Aghuanians, and Iberians/Georgians. After this he went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Returning with his students and with a silver cross plated with gold in which was a piece of the Lord's Cross, he passed through Armenia into the eastern areas to the district of Uti. And he dwelled among marshy places and moss-covered swamps in the place called Gis. He revived the Church and strengthened the faith. He spread preaching the gospel to the land of the Uti, the Aghuans, the Lp'ink', to Kaspk', up to the Ch'oghay Pass, and to other foreign tribes whom Alexander of Macedon had captured and settled around the great Mount Caucasus, namely, the Gargark' and the Kamichik Hep'taghk' (Hephthalites) and he taught them the same form of worship which they had learned long ago and then forgotten [g190].

[Mesrop] was a perfect preacher and apostle to the barbarian mountaineers whom he taught to write in their own language. From there he returned and dwelled in the swampy areas [or, at Mo'rs] hiding from the threats of the cruel princes. Hiding there, he daily strengthened the Church of God.

Then the spirit of fanaticism incited the minds of the bestial tyrants, and in their fury they hastened to capture and kill them. But the venerable Mashtots', warned by the Holy Spirit, quickly dug a hole of the right size. Taking the divine treasure, the Cross of the Lord, he placed it in a box and hid it in the hole he had dug in the ground.

Subsequently, his true and faithful disciples, unanimously putting their trust in prayer, agreed to divide into two groups; the first planned to go up into the districts, while the other, traversing many lands, went to preach the faith. However, those who stayed at the site of the Cross received the martyr's crown after a few days. At the scene of their martyrdom luminous signs and wonderful miracles were observed. These were seen on many occasions by the unbelievers who, learning that these miracles were from God [g191], believed with one accord and were baptized in the faith.

[45] One of the newly converted, who had often seen this sign over the place where the Cross was buried, built a square earthen chapel there, and building a shrine of wooden planks, transferred their relics there and vowed to commemorate them yearly. Many were healed in this place, so that those who believed were confirmed in their faith. First laying the foundations there, they built a Church of God over the site of the

Cross. Afterwards they named it the Old Church of Gis. A long time later, a noble prince called Varaz-P'eroz of the Ar'anshahik clan wanted to renovate the Old Church, but he could not demolish the brick top of the dome, for inside this rested the Lord's Cross and the relics of the martyrs [g192].

---

## 28.

### *An account of Saint Mashtots' students is presented below.*

Not long after the death of Saint Mashtots', at the instigation of the Holy Spirit his students in the districts of Aghuania assembled in one place and were eager to do good works. "What shall we do," they asked, "for the source of our enlightenment has reposed in Christ, and we remain behind as orphans? Come brothers, let us go to Jerusalem, the city of God, and ask for a leader, since the true illumination of the Eastern lands started in Jerusalem with Saint Eghisha (Elisha/Eliseus)."

They prepared and equipped themselves and divided into three groups. They left the regions of Aghuania, reached the borders of Asorestan and subsequently arrived in Jerusalem. Entering the House of God, they worshipped the redeeming Cross (the "Wood of Life") for a long time. They met the spiritually joyous and godly patriarch and greeted the clergy of the church with a humble embrace and were well received by them [g193]. They told the holy patriarch in full about the efforts of Mashtots', and the miracles he performed which resulted in the barbarians being corrected in their ways. Hearing this, [the Jerusalem clergy] received them joyfully and honoured them with great attention for many days. They attached to them three pious priests, the first of whom was Athanasius. They implored them humbly to accompany them that they might guide them in creating dioceses in their own land. When they fulfilled their vows, they joyously kissed the feet of the holy patriarch. At his order they were sent away with gold and silver ornaments and many relics of all the Saints of God. Departing with heartfelt gladness, they went their way accompanied by the priests. Now during the holy fast of forty days, on the seventh Sunday of Easter, [the travelers] arrived in the district of Mets Kueank' in the deep-valleyed and heavily forested land of Artsakh. The group divided into two parts at the crossroads: the first assembled in a place to the north known as Asteghn Blur (Star Hill), while the second settled beyond the river Trtuakan [g194] to the south, in a wooded valley in the forest called Ch'ghax. For they had vowed to each other that they would celebrate Easter there.

---

[46]

## 29.

### *The invasion of all the borders of Aghuania, Armenia, and Georgia by the Northerners, and the martyrdom of Saint Mesrob's students.*

At that time the king of R'osmosok' together with his army and the Tubal brigade gathered all the forces of the Huns, crossed to this side of the River Kur, spread into the district of the Uti, and pitched camp by the town of Xaghxagh. Choosing three strong men, [the R'osmosok' king] appointed them leaders of the great force. He entrusted the multitude of eleven armies to them, and commanded them to divide into three groups and to raid the lands of Aghuania, Armenia, and Georgia. The third group of the army reached [g195] the district of Artsakh at the beginning of Easter and began raiding Mets Kueank'.

When word of this assault reached the Ch'lax group from Jerusalem they were terrified. They hurriedly gathered all the relics together, put them in two silver caskets and concealed them in the ground.

Immediately afterwards there descended like a torrent of rain a pandemonium which brought death with it,

mixed with cries of lamentation and spreading hopeless despair. It swept forward like the waves of the sea, and quickly arrived at Astegh Blur. Everyone there was taken unawares and mercilessly put to the sword. The gold and silver ornaments were plundered, and the holy relics scattered over the hill. It was here that the chief of the priests, the venerable Athanasius, was slain. The invaders took the survivors prisoner and detained them there.

[47] Now it happened that there was [among these captives] a woman called T'aguhi, one of the local noblewomen of the district of Uti from the village of Bagink', an extremely rich woman who frequented the missionaries from Jerusalem. When the general of the Huns spotted her among the prisoners, he became inflamed with a demonic and lascivious passion, for she was very beautiful. He ordered that she should be guarded with great care, since he planned to take her to wife. His men completed the day's raids and heaped all the district's loot and booty together, while his comrades [g196] killed many and drove others into captivity on Astegh Blur. Among these prisoners there were two priests, who were colleagues of the martyr Athanasius. The great general of the Huns camped there that night with his army, and towards evening the chief of the Tubal force ordered the blessed T'aguhi to be fetched that he might satisfy his lewd desires upon her. Armed with the power of the Lord, however, she scorned him, resisted and ridiculed the filthy barbarian. "God forbid", she said, "that I should yield my chaste virginity to a son of a dog, a pig-like heathen, or that I, out of fear of torture, should be afraid to die and exchange this worthless life for one which does not pass away!" And raising her hands to God, she said: "Lord of Lords and King of Kings, do not put me to shame who place my trust in You. Keep me pure and righteous in this present danger. As You gave me rebirth in the [baptismal] basin of light, that I might know You, so now make me free from sin in faith and holiness, and cause the light [g197] of Your truth to shine into the hearts of these senseless barbarians, that they also may recognize You as the one true God."

When the impious mob heard this they went and told their prince, for there was an interpreter among them who listened to her whole speech. The tyrant, filled with fanatical anger, flew into a rage in his snarling and growling bestiality, and ordered that she be put to death with terrible tortures if she would not come to him in honour and respect. His servants went and urged her to submit to the will of their prince. When they were unable to persuade the unwilling T'aguhi, they bound her hands behind her back, dragged her by the hair, tore her face with cruel thorns from the forest thickets, and together they lacerated the body of the Saint; then they beheaded her with a sword. Her battle was like that of Saint Hr'ip'sime, and the great T'aguhi was also crowned with the divine and victorious crown of Christ.

That very night, while the foreign prince and his forces enjoyed themselves with sleepless joy and made merry, a marvellous sign suddenly appeared from the Lord. Everyone clearly observed a strong light shining from the place where the blessed T'aguhi [g198] had been martyred. The torn remnants of her clothes, scattered over the forest, shone like stars, and for a long time this starry light glowed above the holy martyrs. When they saw this, the people called the place Astegh Blur ("Star Hill"), as it is known to this day. The prince was amazed by these miracles of good tidings, and in great fear he ordered the priests of the Lord to be summoned before him. Learning from them the path of salvation, he believed in the living God and ordered that the scattered relics of the Saints to be gathered together, that Saint [T'aguhi] be wrapped in linen, and that they be hidden on the hill. Then with their flocks and goats [as sacrifices], they performed mass with great ceremony in commemoration of their martyrs.

---

[48]

### 30.

***The great general of the Tubal troops believes in Christ and accepts that He is God; and how [the general] is martyred with his troops, children, and his clergy by his king in the land of the Aghuans.***

After the light of truth had entered the heart [g199] of the godly prince Theophilus, he ordered that the prisoners be released, and on Easter morning he set out with his blessed priests and many other believers and the Agistosean [Gr. "holy"] brigade, arriving in the district of Uti. There they dismounted and pitched camp by the Kur River near the harbor by the Ch'omak'atak bridge. The great king of Rosmosok' himself returned with his armies after his raids with great multitudes of prisoners and very great booty. He crossed the Kur from the east and camped opposite them. In his idolatrous error, he ordered sacrifices to be made to his gods in heathen feasting. When the Christian Theophilus and the Agistosean army saw this, they came forward and offered gifts to God in accordance with the precepts of the Christian faith. With the blessing of the holy priests they put the Sign of the Cross on their banners. When the bestial, impious king of the barbarians saw this, he was seized with diabolical frenzy and angrily ordered the blessed general Theophilus to be summoned before him with thirty men. At first he addressed them gently, and then angrily, saying: "You who are dear [g200] to our kingdom because of your victories and bravery," he said, "have been greatly honored by us; you, being of higher rank than all the others, were honored with the leadership of one third of my army. Why have you abandoned the valorous gods of your race who gave us victory in our raids? You have rebelled along with your soldiers and now worship a god of whom we know nothing. Now if you will not make sacrifices to our gods, you and your soldiers will be punished and put to death."

The confessor of Christ, the brave general Theophilus, replied to the king as follows: "Knowledge of the human life is the source of virtue, and virtue, with excellent works, is the mother of godliness. If, to enhance His glory, our nature was united with that of Christ by His birth and the gift of light was received with which to know and recognize God as creator of heaven and earth, one united Holy Trinity, who in His benevolence wishes to keep us free from the harm of worthless idols, how can you take this heavenly grace from us, or compare your transient glory with that of God, or hope by your threats [g201] to scare us into choosing this temporal life, to make us abandon God?" The king roared his outrage and wrathfully ordered that the blessed general Theophilus and his thirty comrades and the blessed priests to be put to a painful death. Confessing the faith on the plain of martyrdom, they valiantly fought their heroic battle and received from Christ the victor's crown. Thus were the holy confessor and the thirty soldiers translated to their heavenly abode.

[49] When the blessed Movse's and Aneroghogis, the sons of the holy general Theophilus, together with the Agistrosean brigade and other believers saw this, they urged on their horses and fled before the impious king, considering it better to be persecuted for Christ's sake than to live a transitory life of impiety. They considered disgrace for the sake of Christ more important than the great treasures of their fathers. They fled south and came to a very high peak of a great mountain which overlooks the country's many districts [g202].

By order of the merciless king, brigade upon brigade was dispatched, and the forces of the Huns pursued and overtook them on the summit of the mountain, where they tried with many entreaties to reconvert them to idol-worship and obedience to the king. Unable to convince them, they put them to the sword in that very spot. Thus Movse's ended his life with his blessed brother and all the godly Agistrosean brigade, receiving from Christ the martyr's crown, shining in splendid radiance from the tops of the northern mountains, and entering the immortal abode with all the Saints. Amen [g203].

## **End of Book One**



# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book Two

---

[50]

#### 1.

#### *History according to my book.*

In the same way that the heavens are bright with stars and the earth with flowers, so are the works of the historian adorned with various events. We have come across some tales of the lands of the East—tales which have found no place in the books of ancient historians—which we consider fitting to incorporate into our work. We recall here how Shapuh, son of Ormizd, king of Persia, had become arrogant in his realm and wanted to hold an investigation to determine which races or peoples possessed rank and honor. He organized a splendid banquet for all the grandee and ancient families of the lords of Persia, and by goblet and vine-slip he designated the various degrees of precedence which they enjoyed before him. The *Mobad* of *Mobads* [head of the Zoroastrian faith] was greatly honored [g204] at the royal table.

After consulting with his nobles, the king said: "I know well the correct order of precedence of Persian nobles such as the Parthians and native Pahlavis. But as to the noble family of Armen and [the Armenian nobles'] order of precedence, I have been unable to learn anything either from my royal ancestors or from books. Now you lords of Armenia have two options to choose from. Either you show me an ancient book that indicates the degree and rank of each house—in which case you shall again receive from us your outstanding positions of honor—or, if you cannot bring [such a document] to the attention of our Aryan brigade, we shall give your highly placed cushions, honors, houses, earth, water, and all your possessions to Aryan noblemen, and expel you."

The princes of Greater Armenia deliberated among themselves and brought before the king the worthy *History* of Agat'angeghos. [The king] ordered that [this book] be read and translated into the Persian language and script. When he learned that the book began with his own ancestor Artashir, he rejoiced greatly, praised the book and, deeply moved, held it before his eyes. Finding the figure of seventeen cushions in this book, [the king] began to rearrange the seats of everyone at the royal table accordingly. Now it came about that Andok, lord of Siwnik', received the fourteenth cushion [g205]. Because of this he haughtily declined to eat, and when admonished by the king, paid no attention to him. It was at this point that news reached the court that large brigades of Khazars had passed through the gate of Choghay into our country. Shapuh assembled a countless army of braves from Asorestan, Xorasan, Xorazm, and many other Persian braves from the district of Atrpatakan as well as Armenians, Georgians, Aghuans, and the twelve tribes of the wild peoples of Mount Caucasus. Taking these countless forces he arose and marched against them.

[51] Andok came up with a scheme which resulted in evil for himself and his country. He broke with the royal house in order to betray it with his army. With 1,700 men and fast, able horses he reached Ctesiphon and hid

his forces outside the city. Then he entered the city with a small retinue. He asked many questions, deceitfully claiming that he had come to join Shapuh, and thus the inhabitants honored him greatly. At dawn, however, his army marched into the town and took an incalculable amount of gold and silver treasure, precious jewels, and innumerable precious pearls, and anything else they could carry from the royal court and the houses of the grandees. They took this enormous booty [g206] to Baghaberd. Then Andok ordered all the animal fodder in his districts to be burned, and he gathered up all the food fit for human consumption and the weapons and equipment and the harness of the cavalry and put them inside the fortress. Next, he ordered all the people of Siwnik' to burn their houses and barns and flee. [People of] the district gathered up all the church ornaments and took them to the church at Shaghat. Tearfully kissing the relics of the Saints and performing night services for eight days, they buried the church under a mound of earth. Then they scattered in all directions. And after that no one dared to mention the name of Siwnik'. The entire country remained deserted and uninhabited for twenty-five years.

At the end of the war [with the Khazars], when King Shapuh returned and saw the destruction [wrought by Andok], he furiously commanded the entire army to march into Siwnik' to enslave both man and beast. However, when [the troops] arrived, they found nothing there. As they circulated around the country, they came to the mound over the church of Shaghat. But when they climbed to the top, a great earthquake occurred and the Persian army and their general At'ashxoday fled away, terrified. Returning from there, they battled with the fortress, but [those inside] rolled boulders down the slope causing a great slaughter. Now although the Persians attacked very forcefully two or three times [g207], they could do nothing. On the contrary, they were killed in great numbers. Yet despite this, the enraged king wanted to intensify the attack. However, all the grandees prostrated themselves before him and begged him not to attack again, but rather to lay waste the land surrounding the fortress.

Then, at an opportune moment, Andok left the fortress and went to the land of the Byzantines taking along much booty. And there, greatly honored, he died. Now it happened that his son Babik longed for his native soil—for our own districts are as dear to us as our parents. [Babik] went to the court of Shapuh, king of Persia, and after meeting one of the soldiers there, he himself was made [a soldier]. He performed great feats of bravery in the Persian Olympics, although no one recognized him.

Now it came about that a Hun named Honagur, who had been plundering the kingdom of Persia, sent a message to King Shapuh, saying: "What is the point of so much bloodshed? Come, let the two of us fight it out in single combat." This Hun had covered his tall, broad body in coats of armor fifty layers thick. He had covered his enormous head with a studded helmet and his forehead, which was three spans wide, [was protected] with a plate of copper. As he grasped his gigantic lance—made from a tall tree from a forest—and his gleaming sword, he was a terror to behold.

[52] It was then that Babik's name was brought forward [g208] to the king as someone capable of resolving the matter. The king of kings summoned Babik and gave him a royal warrant sealed with his signet ring, which had [the likeness of] a boar on it. And [the king] said to him: "If you avenge me this time, you will receive great rewards." [Babik] accepted the king's offer, and, trusting in God's help, he called out: "O churches of Siwnik', help me!" Then he took up his own sturdy arms, clad his fine body in the king's gleaming, pearl-studded armor, fastened his tiger-shaped helmet over his handsome head, girt his sword about his waist, slung his golden shield over his left shoulder, and grasped his fine-tempered lance in his right hand. He mounted his black steed and galloped towards the enemy. They attacked each other, and the thunderous clanging of the blows exchanged by their lances continued from dawn until the ninth hour. But the enormous giant was doomed, for at last the brave Babik defeated that bloody beast, quickly dispatching him with a thrust of his sword.

Shapuh was ecstatic. He summoned Babik to him that he might fulfill the promises he had made. Asking leave to speak, Babik said: "Have the bronze mortar removed from your court." For this mortar was filled with ashes [g209] from the furnace, and whoever passed by it would strike it and say: "May the land of Siwnik'

perish in body and soul and become like these ashes!" Astonished, the king ordered the mortar to be removed. Babik then asked that his native land be returned to him. This the king granted, and he sent him in great honor back to his own land. [Moreover, the king] bestowed on him the same rank as that of the Bagratunis and the Mamikoneans.

[Babik] crossed the Arax River and built a village called Akorz, that is to say "the first of the patrimonial [territories] to be wrested away [from the Persians]". During the first year of his reign, Babik went out hunting, roaming around and looking at his deserted country. Coming to Shaghat, he climbed a hill, and a deer started up and fled towards the mound covering the church. When Babik pursued it, the stag disappeared on the hill. Then [Babik's] horse's hoofs sank into the earth. Babik dismounted and freed his horse with the greatest difficulty. Everyone was astonished, and when they dug the earth away they found the beautiful church full of divine treasure and smelling sweetly. That day was the first day in the month of Hor'i.

Those assembled there performed a great service on that day, and great healing took place among those present. Unbelievers who observed this were converted [g210]. Gor and Gazan, two wealthy brothers who had followed Babik with many other troops, were baptized. Then Babik drew lots [to reward them]. Gor received the village of Xot, while the younger Gazan was allotted the desirable Shaghat. All this occurred twenty years before the reign of the evil Yazdgird who wanted to destroy the Christian faith and make us submit to Gehenna. Saint Vardan and his holy followers were martyred by this same Yazdgird with 1,066 chosen men, 120 years before the Armenian Era began. And here, below, is how these events unfolded.

---

[53]

## 2.

### ***How the Aghuans were threatened by the impious Yazdgird and were saved by Vardan, Armenia's general.***

In the days of the impious Yazdgird, Satan incited and enflamed the king to destroy Christianity. The strict order reached the land of Aghuania that [the people must] abandon their faith and submit to the Magian cult of fire-worship [g211]. This same king visited the same disaster on Armenia. However, the *hazarapet* of the Aghuans and the blessed chief bishop opposed this and united with the Armenians by oath. They very quickly sent their army to inform them of the evil developments. They said: "The Persian brigade which was in the land of the Huns has returned and entered our land, and with them are many other cavalymen from the court. Besides these, they have brought along 300 of their religious teachers (*vardapetk'*). Moreover they have torn the land apart since they have turned some folk towards them and now they want to lay hands on the Church. They force everyone at their king's command, saying: 'If you accept our religion willingly, you shall receive gifts and honors from the king. But if you do not accept it, we have orders to build fire-temples in the villages and hamlets. And into them we shall place the Vahram fire and we shall appoint magi and *mobads* as the lawgivers of your land. Should anyone rebel, he shall be put to death, and his wife and children shall be exiled.'"

When the Armenian brigade heard this, it did not despair. Instead, it united in the face of this bad news and humored [the Persian messengers] and sent them back so as to find a later opportunity to take them by guile [g212] and to prevent them from laying hands on the Church before they could find some way out. The Armenian army wrote to Emperor Theodosius, asking him to help them in their great danger, but he died suddenly. He was succeeded as king by the impious Marcian, who did not keep the alliance but made common cause with the heathens, as was his custom. The Armenian braves, finding help from no quarter, placed their trust in the supreme, almighty power of the Most High. They divided themselves into three armies. The first was entrusted to Nershapuh R'mbosean, protector of the Atrpatakan area; the second went

to Vardan [Mamikonian], the general of Armenia, to cross the Iberian/Georgian border to attack the *marzpan* of Ch'oghay who had come to destroy the churches of Aghuania.

The venerable Vardan did not know about the ambush being prepared by the accursed apostate Vasak who, before the Armenian army had entered Aghuania, told the Persian *marzpan* Mersebuxt that the Armenian army had split into parts and that Vardan and his small force were headed in his direction. "Be ready to come out against them so that they may be completely obliterated." This was the impious man's advice. When Mersebuxt received such encouragement from Vasak, he did not stay in the Ch'oghay area, but gathering up the multitude of his troops quickly crossed [g213] the great Kur River. He met him on the borders of Iberia/Georgia opposite the town of Xaghxagh which was the winter residence of the Aghuan kings. Starting battle, he surrounded the entire plain, fully armed to fight the Armenian brigade. When Vardan the brave and the troops with him saw the enormous size of the pagan army and the small size of their own forces, they were not troubled by the overwhelming numbers. They united, and raising their voices to Heaven, said: "Judge those, O Lord, who judge us; fight them who fight us; help us with Your sword and buckler and make the host of the wicked tremble and shake."

[54] Thus did they pray. Then, forming into a group, the heroes of Armenia attacked, scattered the enemy's right flank and fell upon their left. They put them all to the sword and routed them across the face of the plain and into the secure areas of the forests near the deep valleys of the Lubnas River. It was here that some [troops] of the Baghasakan king came to meet them, and one of the Armenian lords, Mush, of the Dimak'sean brigade, was thrown from his horse and died, and Gazrik was wounded. Then [g214] Arshawir Arsharuni lifted up his eyes heavenward, roared like a lion, charged like a wild boar and killed the brave Vurk, brother of the king of the Lp'ink'. And he slaughtered countless others there. In this way each man dealt with his opponent. Moreover, in the forceful attack more men were drowned in the river than were slain by the sword on dry land. The clear waters of the river ran with the blood of the multitude of the fallen, and not a single one of them escaped. Now it happened that there was one of the enemy soldiers who had been hiding in the thick woods in the plain. Still wearing his armor he mounted his horse and crossed the river, escaping by a hairsbreadth. He brought the bad news to the main army, which fled to their royal capital (*shahastan*).

The Armenian troops, ending the great battle, gathered together the enormous booty and formed a huge heap of gold and silver and the arms and ornaments of the brave men and their horses. Then they turned and attacked the fortresses and towns which the Persians held in Aghuania. They fought fiercely, set fire to their secure enclosures, rooted out swarms of wicked magi whom they put to the sword and left as carrion for the birds of the air and the beasts [g215] of the field. They purified every place of the filthy sacrifices and freed the churches from their unbelievable difficulties.

When the Aghuan lords and peasants—who, for the sake of God's name had scattered and dispersed into the mountain strongholds of the Caucasus—saw the great victory won by the Armenian brigade, they came forth and joined them, mixed with the soldiers and allied themselves to their martyrdom. Then they went to the Gate of the Huns which the Persians held by force. They captured and destroyed the fortress, killed the soldiers stationed inside, and entrusted the Gate to a certain Vardan who was of the line of the Aghuan kings. In all these feats of bravery, no one fell except for Mush, who was martyred.

They sent [Vardan,] the same man who had been entrusted with the gate, as an ambassador to the land of the Huns to speak with them and establish an inviolable oath of alliance. When the Huns heard what had happened, they made haste, went there, and saw their success with their own eyes. Then [the Huns] swore by their own laws and accepted the oath of the Christians to maintain a firm alliance, which was what all of them wanted. Now it happened that while they were in this place, a messenger arrived from Armenia bearing the bad tidings [g216] about the apostate Vasak, who had ravaged much of the country of Armenia. Vardan set off with his great booty, happy and confident, and rejoicing in God and placing his trust in Him. He arrived in Armenia in thirty days. Vasak heard about the triumphant arrival of Vardan the Brave and about the alliance between the Huns and the Aghuans. [Vasak] fled from his presence. And he suffered bad luck on account of

his evil conduct, for he found no mercy from God.

In the days of Yazdgird these things took place among the Aghuans and Armenians with help from On High.

---

[55]

### 3.

***Mesrob Vardapet comes to Esuaghe'n, king of Aghuania, invents an alphabet, organises schools again, and destroys the remaining sects, confirming the faith in the House of the Aghuans***

In the time when Theodosius the Less was emperor of Byzantium, Vr'amshapuh was king of Armenia, Yazdgird was king of Persia, and Esuaghe'n [g217] was king of Aghuania, the venerable Mesrob, the worthy and chosen vessel of the Holy Spirit, came to our patriarch Eremia and King Esvaghe'n in Aghuania. They willingly accepted his teaching in accordance with the divine gifts which had been granted him, since it was through him that the Holy Spirit had given alphabets to the Armenians and Georgians. [The Aghuan leadership] was well pleased and gave him chosen youths to teach. From Siwnik' [Mesrop] summoned the interpreter Benjamin whom the lad Vasak had sent through Bishop Anania. They came to Mesrob, and with their assistance [Mesrop] created an alphabet for the guttural, disjointed, barbarous, and harsh language of the Gargarats'ik'. He left his pupil Yovnat'an here as spiritual overseer. Then, appointing priests for the king's court, he returned to Armenia. He travelled to Byzantium to Emperor Theodosius and returning from there circulated around with his students. Now he heard that there remained a pagan sect in Gardman and so he returned from Siwnik' and went to Xurs, the prince of Gardman. With his help matters there were corrected. Then he went to Ashusha, the *bdeashx* of Iberia/Georgia, who had called on him to do the same [reformation] in his lands.

In these times the accursed Nestorius appeared, he who was anathematized by the two hundred [clerics] at Ephesus. In the first year of the reign of the second King Yazdgird, Saint [g218] Sahak died, at the end of the month of Nawasard. Six months later the venerable *vardapet* Mesrop died and was buried with the Saints in the city of Vagharshapat.

Now it came about that a certain lord of Gardman named Xosrov went to Armenia. He happened to be at a banquet in the presence of the cowardly king Shapuh. Drunk with wine he behaved lewdly toward a certain woman. The furious Shapuh ordered that he be thrown into jail, however [Xosrov], leaning on his sword, left the chamber and no one dared to lay a hand on him.

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book Two

---

[56]

#### 4.

***The transfer of the patriarchal see of Aghuania from Ch'oray to the great city of Partaw due to the Khazars' destructive raids.***

After these events, the land of Aghuania was enslaved by the Khazars, and churches and gospels were destroyed by fire. Now in the second year of Xosrov, king of kings, when [dating by] the Armenian Era was initiated, the throne of the Aghuanian patriarchate [g219] was transferred from the city of Ch'oray to the capital Partaw because of the raiding expeditions of these enemies of the Cross of Christ. They enthroned as patriarch Lord Abas from the district of Mets Irank' who held office for forty-four years, and then passed to life eternal after having lived a saintly life.

---

#### 5.

***The appearance of the martyrs on Mount Dizap'ayt and the discovery of their relics in the time of Abas' patriarchate.***

Before the superintendency of Lord Abas over this land of Aghuania, the martyria on Mount Dizap'ayt at Kataroy monastery were burned down by our enemies. In the days of King Vach'agan and Gar'nik, bishop of Amaras, there appeared men who were named Saint Movse's, Saint Daniel, and Saint Eghia (Elisha/Eliseus). They were the sons of Sanesan, king of the Mask'ut'k', who, with some 3,870 others [g220], had become the students of Saint Grigoris. Now [to escape] they had fled in haste to Mount Dizap'ayt where they lived on grass. But the bloodthirsty Sanesan followed them and put them to the sword on the ninth day of the month of Nawasard. By their intercession may God have mercy on this land of Aghuania and on the country of the Armenians for ever.

---

[57]

#### 6.

***The vision of Vehik.***

In the first year of the patriarchate of Abas, I, the unworthy Vehik, saw in a vision a hermit holding the sign of the Lord's Cross; and he spoke my name. I asked: "Who are you, lord?" He replied: "I am Poghosik. Come

now and revere this Cross, but do not get near it." When I awoke from my sleep, I dismissed these things. Two years later in a vision I saw Saint Varos in a monk's garb. He told me: "We are relics hidden in the district of Artsakh in the field of the Mxants' clan of Kaghset: the protomartyr Stephen, Theodosius martyr, Saints Varos, Mamas, Mar, Sargis, the martyr George [g221], Cosmas and Damian, and parts of the Holy Forty." Then there appeared to me a man in the same form who said: "I am Basira, the servant of Christ who was tortured on the Cross, and I asked the Savior not to permit my relics to remain lost; those who want a portion of this Holy Cross may have it, and there is also a piece of the Cross which received the body of God." I, Vehik, remained in astonishment for seven years, praying to All-merciful God and those same martyrs to reveal to me the true meaning of the vision.

That same vision was repeated, again urging the removal of the relics. "We are still in distress," it said. Then I, Vehik, arose and went to the blessed patriarch Abas and told him about the group of glorious martyrs. When he heard about the vision, [Abas] glorified the living God with much thanksgiving. He immediately sent Daniel, the pious priest of Tri, to find out in person about the wondrous mystery. The trustworthy man quickly left with the priest Boh and the scribe Ezekiel, and soon arrived at the field of Kaghset. They came to me, Vehik. Others arrived to work with us, namely, Abas, abbot of Momharek' monastery and his flock, the priest Markos with his brothers, and Father Tirit' [g222] of the monastery of Saint John from the desert of Karmeghinay, and a great multitude of other believers.

We stood with them in prayer, and then, fervently beseeching God, we began to dig as hard as we could. Suddenly the place was filled with fragrant perfumes, and the hidden treasure was revealed. This was in accordance with the Savior's words: "It is not right to hide one's light and place it under a bushel" [Mark 4. 21, ff.]. Thus did God reveal a torch to His blessed servants and give a light of inextinguishable radiance to their yearning hearts. For God had mercy on this land of Aghuania in revealing the wholesome sweetness of the field of Kaghset. The people blessed God and praised the Saints and placed the relics in precious reliquaries. The priest Daniel took a part of each relic and quickly went with this most precious gift to the patriarch Abas. [Abas] was greatly pleased at this, celebrated a feast in commemoration of the coming of the Saints and placed them in very clean containers [g223].

---

## 7.

***The letter from Yovhanne's, kat'oghikos of Armenia, to Lord Abas, kat'oghikos of Aghuania, concerning the confirmation of the Faith.***

See next entry.

---

## 8.

***The expulsion from Aghuania of the heretics whom Lord Abas, kat'oghikos of Aghuania, exiled on receipt of the above letter.***

We omit the translation of these chapters [pp. g224-g230], which deals with spiritual and doctrinal matters. C. J. F. Dowsett's fine translation of chapters 7 and 8 is available [here](#).

---

***History of the rising of barbarian peoples and about the universal disasters which befell the lands.***

Oh, there are some amazing stories which I have prepared to make known to listeners near and far! They cannot be compared to accounts from earlier ages about the various battles and periods of confusion which broke out in different places and among different peoples [g230]. They were recorded in advance by the Holy Spirit with many details and metaphors. The work of secular authors, such as philosophical [compositions], and clever and eloquent fables of earthly and spiritual events also do not compare!

For there came and descended on us that of which Our Savior spoke in the life-bringing Gospel concerning the times of tribulation. He humanely brought this to the patient attention of the chosen twelve: "You shall hear about wars and rumors of wars, and all the multitude of famines and pestilences and earthquakes, and portents involving the sun and the moon and the stars in heaven, and confusion between nations like the confusion of the waves of the sea" [Matt. 24. 6, 7, 29]. And the Lord warned us to be careful, saying: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour" [Matt. 25. 13].

Now, with my mind and thoughts so overwhelmed and occupied with universal disasters, I have forgotten the course of my narrative, which was prepared to lay the first foundations of a history of the times and of the events which took place in our land of Aghuania. It is as the Prophet says: "I forgot to eat my bread because of my loud groaning" [Ps. 101. 6 = A.V. Ps. 102, 4-5]. However, I will temporarily suppress the fear and dread which still possess me [g231], and will now return to our narration. For we observe that there are many folk who wish to hear an account covering all the countless blows inflicted by the barbarian enemies around us, and to hear of the very great and astonishing miracles with which the strong and humane right hand of God defeated our enemies and struck them dead before our eyes. Because these events unfolded over a long period of time, I shall begin in the first [year] of the 18th *nahanj* of the Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the month of Mehekan, which was in the 35th year of Xosrov, son of Ormizd, king of kings of the Persians.

---

[59]

## 10.

***This historical account begins from the first [year] of the 18th nahanj.***

Now it happened in the days of the philo-Christian emperor Flavus Heraclius that the time allotted for the captivity of Jerusalem ended—as it had ended previously after seventy years in the days [g232] of Cyrus the Persian—God visited and upbraided that stiff-necked king of the Persians, the great Xosrov, who had for a long time defeated and expelled the House of Augustus together with their great kingdom of Rome and the renowned Palestinian city.

Xosrov saw that the war he had begun against the emperor of Byzantium was succeeding under the command of his general whom he had put in charge of the army drawn up against the West. Although [that general's] real name was Xor'ean, [Xosrov, because of his success] began to call him by various fancy names, now R'ozmi-Ozan and now Shah(r)-Varaz, on account of the advances, attacks, and victories won by Persian cunning.

Xor'ean took and set fire to the great city of Jerusalem [A. D. 614] and captured the life-giving Wood, the Cross, the Light of the World, the instrument by which Hell was enslaved, together with all the sacred vessels of gold and silver of those regions set with precious stones, purple robes sewn with costly pearls. [He took]



even the furniture of the buildings in the wondrous and magnificent capital cities [he had conquered], and many animals and birds [g233] the very names of which were unknown to the lands of the East. However, let me not lengthen my narration with the deeds he performed, since this is extraneous and superfluous to the plan of my work. He took these heaps of treasure as loot to the court of the Persian king. Nonetheless, he was not satisfied nor satiated with the immense riches and the various banquet singers and the delicate maidens and youths [he had captured]. He fought on land and sea, and he transferred the beautiful cities of the Byzantines together with their inhabitants to Persia. In this way he founded cities which architects built in the same manner as they had been [on Byzantine territory], and he called one "Greater than Antioch." Similarly he added "Greater than" to the names of all the other cities he had thus founded.

When he emerged victorious and—as he wanted—had imposed his will on all nations and kingdoms, [King Xosrov] became so strong and haughty that he thought that it was through his own personal bravery that he had made his kingdom so remarkable and awesome. He forgot that the Lord is above the kingdoms of men and gives power to whomever He pleases.

Consequently, he began to weaken before the emperor of Byzantium, and was no longer able to hold up his head with his old power. The emperor [Heraclius] suddenly informed all his [g234] armies and generals who were fighting Xosrov that God was helping them, and he immediately ordered them to assemble in one place with all the forces they had. All took note of the time and place designated for the assembly. Everyone heeded the call; no one waited for his comrade, but without delay all of them hastened to beat their ploughshares into swords and their scythes into spears. The weak and the peaceful were encouraged [with the words] "We are strong and men of war" [cf. Joel 3. 10]. Setting out with his entire army, [Heraclius] himself served as leader and general for his men. Leaving his court in the hands of his son, he put the crown on his son's head and set him on the throne of the kingdom in his place.

[60] He did not march against the Persian army which had occupied his lands and besieged his cities into submission. He did not pass near them or incite them to battle. Rather, he left them there in his own country, and took to sea. [Heraclius] crossed the [Black] Sea, and by marching through the land of the Egerians, he reached Armenia. He crossed the Araxes River, intending to catch the great King Xosrov unprepared.

When Xosrov was informed [about developments], he was dumbfounded. "Isn't this the same man who leaped into the abyss out of fear of me [g235]? But now, what's happened?" Then [King Xosrov] fled before him to the fortresses on the Median border, and from there he passed into the land of Asorestan. He quickly sent fast messengers to his great general Shahr-Varaz with letters containing very great oaths and threats. "My great shame and rage will be mollified if you come quickly and do not let live a single man or beast from among those who so dared to come before me." The general took the order in his hand and read and learned about the terrible news. He immediately held a review of all the Persian troops. The towns of the Byzantines and Palestinians, which he had brought into obedient service, he left in the hands of garrisons which he commanded to carefully hold until his return from the present business. He put his army on the move, [an army] with chosen, well-armed men and fast horses, and he hastened to implement the king's command.

The great Emperor Heraclius, seeing that the king of Persia had evaded him, ceased to pursue him. [Heraclius] spread about raiding through the region of Atrpatakan to the place called Gaysh *awan*, a fortified place [g236] on the Median border which the Persian kings had chosen as a summer residence during the hot season because of its healthy cool climate. Heraclius plundered, ravaged, and enslaved the entire country. Then he turned back, wanting to winter in the areas of the lands of the Aghuans, Georgians, and Armenians. For this reason he wrote to the princes and leaders of these lands telling them to voluntarily come before him, receive and serve him and his forces during the winter. If they did not [do as he said], he would regard them as pagans and have his troops capture their strongholds and enslave their lands. When all the chiefs and princes of the land of the Aghuans heard this, they quit the great city of Partaw at Xosrov's order and fortified themselves in strongholds here and there. There were numerous Christian and pagan craftsmen, residents of Partaw, who remained in the city, unable to flee due to weakness or infirmity.

Now there was a certain blessed priest, meek and mild, named Zak'aria, who was a monk at the church in Partaw. He put the lives of the people before his own, and through oaths and various other means, by his prayers and pledges, was able to save the lives of many Christians [g237]. He did the same for the Jews and pagans. As a result, he was subsequently lauded by everyone for his efforts and appointed to a bishopric in the Aghuanian see. When the Byzantine army arrived in its countless multitude, it encamped in the district of Uti by the swift stream within the confines of the village of Kaghankatuk'. They trampled down and destroyed the beautiful vineyards and fields over which they passed. Then they went and camped by the Trtu (Terter) River near the village of Diwtakan.

The Persian army called the "New Army", came and caught up with them. [This Persian force] was under the general Shahapghakan. It included one of the faithful nobles of the king, a governor, and a commander named Granik[an] Saghar. [The latter] also came and descended to where [the Byzantines] were to be found. Yet another Persian general marched from Byzantine territories. [They] hurled the Heraclian armies back and drove them over the land of Siwnik'. For although the Persian forces had sustained heavy blows they nevertheless drove, threw, and beat him back to his own country, and then retook the cities which he had forcibly taken from them [g238].

---

[61]

## 11.

### ***How Xosrov mobilized his troops against the emperor of Byzantium and defeated him for many years by sword and enslavement on Byzantine territory.***

At Heraclius' order, immense hordes of Khazars arose and fell upon our land. The Persian king Xosrov sent envoys to them, inquiring: "By whose command have you entered my land? [Was it by order of Heraclius, the man] who roamed over the isles of the western seas, fleeing from me? If you were in need of gold and silver and precious stones and muslin and purple robes embroidered with gold and encrusted with pearls, I could have provided more than twice as much as he to satisfy your desires. Therefore I tell you: do not repeat your raids on me because of [Heraclius'] vain demands. If you do, have it your own way, but I shall now tell you in advance what I shall do. In order to make him abandon to me [what he has taken] in alliance with you, I shall summon from his land my great and victorious general Shahr-Varaz and my two brave warriors Shahen and K'rtakaren and my select, fully-armed soldiers in their thousands [g239] and tens of thousands whom I sent against the West. I shall ruin and destroy him and throw him out of my country. After that I shall turn [the horses'] bridles towards the east and shall march against you with all my might and shall not leave you alone or give you rest or respite until I have chased you to the ends of the earth. Then you will comprehend the senseless and disastrous nature of your actions. But after that, where shall I lead this enormous multitude [of my troops] and bid them rest? What country would be enough for them? I will visit upon you these very things which I have just now described should you continue [your raids]." At these threatening words, [the Khazars] halted [their campaigns] for that year and returned through the same gates.

Now when the prince who was [the Khazars'] lord, saw all the booty they had captured in these raids, however—people, animals, vessels of silver and gold, and costly raiment—he decided to raid the same places himself. He ordered all those who were under his command—different clans and peoples, mountaineers and plain-dwellers, men who lived under roofs and others who lived out in the open, seamen and landsmen, men with shaven heads and men with long hair—to prepare and arm themselves well and to come when he gave the signal [g240].

In the thirty-eighth year of Xosrov, the year of crisis and disaster and the slaying of Xosrov, Jebu Xak'an, the man we mentioned above, arrived with his son. No one could count the numbers of his troops. When this

horrible news reached the land of the Aghuans, it was decided to fortify our land in the fortress of the great capital city of Partaw. This was done at the command of a man called Gayshak' who had been sent by Xosrov as chief and prince of this country. [Gayshak'] enclosed within [Partaw] a multitude of the inhabitants of the surrounding districts and prepared to resist [the Khazars]. He also wanted to strengthen his position by means of an alliance with the grandees of the land and the inhabitants of the city. He prepared to observe what would happen to the defenders of the great city of Ch'oray and the soldiers on the marvellous walls which the kings of Persia had built at great expense. [The Persian kings had] drained [the resources of] their land and recruited architects and procured many different types of materials for the construction of this colossal work with which they blocked [the passes] between Mount Caucasus and the great sea of the East [the Caspian].

[62] However, when the universal wrath confronting us all came, [the invaders] like the billowing waves of the sea, crashed against [the walls] and destroyed them to the foundations forthwith. The terror [of the people in Partaw] increased at the sight of the multitude which descended on them [g241]: hideously ugly, insolent, broad-faced, without eyelashes, and with long flowing hair like women. They were even more horrified when they saw [the Khazars'] bent and well-aimed bows, whose arrows rained down on them like heavy hailstones.

[The terror increased] when they saw how [the Khazars] fell on them like shameless and ravenous wolves and mercilessly slaughtered them in the city's byways and streets. [The invaders'] eyes did not distinguish between the fair, the handsome, or the young among men and women, nor the weak and helpless. They did not spare the lame nor the old. They did not feel pity, mercy, or compassion for the children who clutched their murdered mothers and sucked blood from their breasts instead of milk. Like fire running through straw, they entered in at one gate and emerged through another, and in their wake they left [corpses] for the birds and beasts of the country. And the waves continued to move on towards us.

When our chief and prince—the man who held and defended the town of Partaw—learned of all this, he wanted to address the multitude fortified into the city's stronghold on account of intense fear, about what was to be done. He opened his mouth to speak, but in his great terror he was not able to utter a single word, because he had lost heart. Trembling seized him from head to toe [g242] and his knees knocked together. When the multitude saw just how terrified he was they cried out loudly: "Why have you penned us all in here to wait for the hour when we shall have to give ourselves and our wives and children into the hands of these blood-thirsty beasts? How can we escape and flee before them with such a mob of people in the city? This murderous enemy has advanced to within three miles of us." Then each man said to his comrade: "Why should we meekly let this city become our cemetery? Let us abandon our goods and chattels and leave. Maybe we can somehow save ourselves." And they all made for the four gates of the city and hurried to escape to the mountainous district of Artsakh.

Now when the enemy became informed of what had happened, they went in pursuit. [The Khazars] overtook a group [of fugitives] at the foot of the mountain opposite the large village of Kaghankatuk' which is in the same district of Uti where I too am from. As daylight was fading, however, [the Khazars] were unable to inflict great harm on them. Of those who had fallen into their hands, some they killed and others they took back to their camp behind their equipment and wagons and pack-animals. And by the mercy of God, [the Khazars] stopped pursuing the mass of the fugitives. During that night all [the fugitives] [g243] escaped—just as the Jews had once crossed the Red Sea—and reached the secure district of Artsakh. As for that prince named Gayshak', he too fled with his entire house to Persian territory. After that he was unable to occupy the same principality.

[63] Following this, the flood [of invaders] rose and coursed over the land of Iberia/Georgia. [The Khazars] encircled and besieged the luxurious, prosperous, famous, and great commercial city of Tiflis. The great Emperor Heraclius was informed about this. He too mobilized all his forces and went to join his ally. [The Khazar Qaqan and Heraclius] were delighted to see each other and exchanged royal gifts and presents. Then one could have beheld the misery of the wretches enclosed in the stronghold [of Tiflis]. Disaster upon disaster was visited on them. And yet the time [for their destruction] had not yet come. For it happened that Xosrov

heard about the meeting of the two great kings at the city before the siege began. He quickly sent an auxiliary army under his eager, brave, and warlike general Shahrapagh together with a thousand select cavalry from his own palace guard [g244]. When the inhabitants of the city saw these reinforcements of strong and seasoned fighters, they were reassured and began to mock the two kings. [The inhabitants] were not at all dismayed but encouraged each other and they repaired and rebuilt the damaged parts of the walls. [They did this even though] they saw the countless multitude of troops of the North and the West surrounding the city like mountains and making the ground tremble from their numbers. They saw the four-wheeled ballista and various other weapons built by Byzantine engineers with which [the enemy] unerringly hurled huge rocks to breach the walls. They saw the great bulging hides full of stones and sand with which they caused the Kur River, which surrounds one side of the city, to overflow and dash against the wall.

The two kings consulted together when their armies had become exhausted and when they had lost many of their infantry in battle. They said: "Why should we suffer this loss to our forces? Is it not true that 'if we bind the strong man, we can loot his house as we choose?'" Then the great Emperor Heraclius zealously arranged and planned what was to be done [g245]. He told the man who had come to help him: "Return [to your land] with your army in peace for this year, for I can see that you were reared a cool climate. You will not be able to endure the coming of summer in the sweltering land of Asorestan where, on the great Tigris River, the capital of the Persian king lies. When next year comes and the hot months have passed, quickly come back so that we may carry out our plans. Meanwhile, I shall keep fighting the king of Persia and threatening and harassing his land and those subject to him. Furthermore I shall arrange things so cunningly that one of his own people will kill him."

When the inhabitants of the city learned of their [enemies'] weakness and exhaustion, they became still more arrogant. They set in play the cause of their own subsequent destruction. For they brought a large pumpkin and drew on it the image of the king of the Huns, a cubit broad and a cubit long. In place of his eyelashes which no one could see, they drew a thin line; the region of his beard they left ignominiously naked, and they made the nostrils a span wide with a number of hairs under them in the form of a moustache so that all might recognize him. They brought [the pumpkin] and placed it on the wall opposite them, and shouted out to the [enemy] forces [g246]: "Behold your imperial sovereign! Turn and worship him, for this is Jebu Xak'an!" Then, seizing a spear, they stuck it into the pumpkin which caricatured him before them. They also mocked, jeered, and reviled the other king [Heraclius] and called him a foul sodomite. When the kings saw and heard this, they became vindictively angry, and they stored up that hatred and rancor in their hearts. Tossing their heads and swearing mighty oaths, they vowed that they would seek vengeance for these insults with which they had been reviled and that no one in their own kingdoms would be spared until that happened. Turning away, they withdrew [in an atmosphere] of threats [g247].

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book Two

---

[64]

#### 12.

#### *Arrival of the Northern troops to aid Heraclius.*

In the 36th year of Xosrov, Emperor Caesar Augustus [Heraclius] devised a scheme by which he might avenge the unbelievable shame and insults he had been subjected to. At this time he united under him the entire realm of the Byzantines and summoned the army to help him breach the great Mount Caucasus which shut off the lands of the northeast. [He intended] to open the Choray gates to let through many different barbarian tribes and by means of them to conquer the king of Persia, the proud Xosrov. He equipped and instructed one of his nobles named Andre', a brilliant and wise man, and sent him with promises of immense wealth [to achieve this]. [Heraclius] said: "If [the Northerners] help me in this undertaking, I will satisfy the thirst of these bestial, gold-loving tribes of long-haired [or, pigtailed] men."

When this was heard by the man called Jebu Xak'an—who was second to the king of the North, the second in his kingdom—and when he considered the promise of great gifts and the loot he could get [g248] by attacking all the lands subject to the king of Persia, he replied with great enthusiasm: "I shall avenge [Heraclius] on his enemies, and shall arise and go to his aid in person with my brave army. I shall satisfy him by warring with sword and bow as he wishes." Then, to confirm the agreement, he sent the same noble [Andre'] [south] with a body of some thousand strong, select cavalry and skilled archers. They quickly passed through the Ch'oray gates, ignoring the garrison and army of the Persian king which was stationed at the great gate. Then they swooped down like eagles on the great Kur River, not sparing anyone who came to resist them. Then they travelled over the land of the Iberians/Georgians and the Egerians and cut across the great sea up to the royal palace. They entered into the presence of the great emperor Heraclius, and swore mutual oaths each according to his own law. [The Northerners] received their instructions from him concerning their expedition, and then they returned to their own land via the same route. And no one suspected anything.

At the beginning of the thirty-seventh year of Xosrov[is reign], the king of the North sent the promised fighting force [g249]. He appointed his brother's son as its general, a man named Shat' in honor of his authority. He came and raided throughout all the borders of the land of Aghuania and part of Atrpatakan, putting many Christians and pagans to the sword. As for the number of people taken captive, who can estimate their number, or put it into writing?

[65] Establishing camp on the shore of the Arax River, [Shat'] sent an envoy to the great king Xosrov informing him of [the Khazars'] alliance with the emperor and that they had come to help him. The texts of their messages to each other ran as follows: "The king of the North, ruler of the entire world, your king, and the king of kings says: 'If you do not withdraw from the king of the Byzantines and surrender to him all the

lands and cities which you have taken by force and return all the prisoners of his country now in your hands, together with the Wood of the Cross which all Christian peoples worship and glorify; if you do not recall your troops from all of his territory, then I shall turn against you, governor of Asorestan, and for each evil deed you committed against him, I shall repay you double. I shall put all your lands to my sword, just as you put his lands to your sword [g250]. I shall not spare you, nor shall I delay doing to you what I am telling you I shall do."

When the great king Xosrov heard all this, he arose like a raging torrent, like a lion against its hunters, like a bear whose cub has been taken. This is how he was. Although he saw that [the Khazars and the Byzantines] had united and come against him, in his cunning he did not show that he feared [Shat'] or sought to hide from him. On the contrary, he replied proudly and wrathfully: "Go tell your king, my brother Xak'an, that your House has been honored and respected for ages by my ancestors and myself as that of our dear brother. Indeed, we have been allied with each other through the marriage ties of our sons and daughters. It was unworthy of you to be paralysed and to allow yourself to be led astray by the words of that Byzantine fighter [Heraclius], who is my servant." [Taking this message] the courier returned to his own land.

The emperor took his army and marched against the Persian lands, trying single-mindedly and resolutely to reach the court of the Persian king. When the king of the Persians saw that the matter had not been settled and that [Heraclius] was coming against him boldly [g251], he fled and arrived at his own capital, the great Ctesiphon (Tizbon). He evacuated his wives, concubines, and children to the other side of the Tigris River. He assembled and prepared the troops nearby, which were few in number, organized them and sent them against the emperor. Now there was a certain man at court who was known for his bravery. [Xosrov], through flattery, honors, and great riches enticed him [to participate]. [Xosrov even] changed [the man's] name, calling him R'ochveh ("Fortunate"). He appointed him commander of the force and sent him against the waves [of invaders], designating him commander of the troops. [R'ochveh], through fear of the king's command, accepted this position unwillingly because he knew that Xosrov's hastily assembled and weak force would be defeated by the emperor. He wrote to Xosrov once, twice, four times in warning: "I must inform you that if you do not quickly increase [my strength] with auxiliary troops you will soon hear about my death and the destruction of your army. I do not fear my own death, but you must be aware of the situation."

[66] The king ordered this reply to be written: "Do not fear them, but fight and defeat them!" In the end he wrote him an angry reply: "If you cannot conquer them, then why should you not die [g252]?" When [R'ochveh] read this stern reply in the presence of his troops, he raised his hands to the sun and the moon and loudly cried out: "My gods, judge between me and my merciless king."

He and his troops fell in battle before the Byzantine forces, like dust swept away by a hurricane.

Now when the Persian nobles saw this additional disaster which had befallen the Persian army, they began to murmur among themselves. "How long will these streams of blood—the blood of folk from the Aryan world—flow in one place and another because of warfare? How long must we fear and tremble before this blood-thirsty king? How long will our goods and belongings, our gold and silver be gathered into the royal treasury? How long will our roads be shut and blocked to the detriment of trade and profit [we might derive] from various regions? How long will our souls tremble in our bodies from fear of his orders? Truly, did he not exhaust and swallow up like the sea the choicest of our comrades, the leaders of the land? And did not many of our brothers, company by company, detachment by detachment, die on many occasions through various tortures at his command? Some were even drowned. Did he not separate men from their wives and fathers from their children sending them to distant peoples as servants and slaves [g253] and assembling them to fight all over the world against cruel enemies?"

They expressed these and many similar sentiments among themselves, whispering, not daring to utter anything aloud until the time came for his life to end. Then a man arose who was a lord from one of Xosrov's trusted families, and the *dayeak* ("guardian/tutor") of his eldest son Kawad. He advised Kawad and got him to kill his

father and the multitude of his brothers. Then [Kawad] seized [rule of] the kingdom of Persia, [all] through the planning and guidance of his tutor, who charmed and confused the most honourable suite of courtiers at Xosrov's court. He quickly won the hearts of all for his ward Kawad in order to enthrone him in place of his father.

---

[67]

### 13.

#### *The slaying of Xosrov.*

Listen now a while and I will tell to you briefly about this man's cunning [g254]. [I will narrate] how and in what fashion this hunter managed to pen up in the cage of death the awesome lion of the East at whose roar alone distant peoples trembled with fear and nearby peoples melted like wax. [I will narrate how this guardian] stole everyone's hearts in just a moment's time and fell upon [Xosrov] as upon a [helpless] orphan. [Moreover, I will tell] how he achieved all this without calling on any other king or prince for assistance or arranging for distant tribes and peoples to militarily help his ward against [Xosrov]. All he did was to send a secret message to Emperor Heraclius asking him to stay where he was for a few days with his troops.

[The guardian] ordered that letters be written in Kawad's name to the grandees and leaders of the different brigades of the great court of the kingdom of Persia to the following effect: "The kingdom has been taken from my father and given to me; be ready [to assist me] with a few cavalry." He positioned [these troops] at the head of the bridge over the Tigris River, at the town of Veh Artashir opposite the palace of Ctesiphon where his father Xosrov was protected by his bodyguard. He had it proclaimed loudly to the right and left of Kawad: "Whoever values his life and wishes to live out his days in happiness [g255] should quickly come out in support of Kawad's rule, for he is now the king of kings." They opened the doors of Anyushn *berd* (the Fortress of Oblivion) and boldly called out all the king's prisoners, an enormous multitude, who had been shut up in the shadow of death for a long time. And they said to them: "Come out, you poor wretches, tormented by Xosrov, for the gates of life have been opened to you by the newly-crowned king, his son Kawad!" Their chains broken, all of them emerged together, and the sound of their blessings rose up to heaven. They blessed Kawad and cried "May the king live for ever!" And mounted on excellent horses, and galloping here and there and reviling Xosrov, they rode to attack him, chains in hand.

Many of the palace guards, the king's bodyguard, and the charioteers of the Xosrov's court took their banners and went over to his son Kawad. Those who remained at the court were urged by Kawad's messengers to observe things carefully and to seize Xosrov or be killed.

Now when Xosrov heard the noise and the shouting, he asked those [g256] near him: "What is that clamor?" They remained silent, too embarrassed to tell him. When the confused sounds of trumpets grew even louder, [Xosrov] again asked those near him: "What is that disorderly racket?" And they replied: "Your son Kawad intends to rule in your place, and everyone is running to him. They have massed opposite this city on the bank of the river, and have freed all those who were detained in the great prison at your command. They are overjoyed and bless him, and call him king."

[68] When Xosrov heard this disastrous news, especially about the freeing of the prisoners, he groaned and sighed and lamented within himself. Sitting or standing he was unable to think or feel anything, for he watched the enormous army advancing on him. He walked through the gate of his garden and hid among the trees, and his soul trembled and cringed for sudden fear. His eyes saw the merciless sword raised above his head. Then a brigade came and surrounded the palace, and a search-party came looking for him. They found him seated there [in the garden] in despair. They took him out of the palace and put him into a hall called the "House of the Indians (*K'ataki Hndukn*)" [g257] within a palace named Maraspan[s palace]. When [Xosrov]

was inside and ascertained what the place was and who its owner was, he struck his breast and sobbed: "Woe is me, wretch that I am. How I was charmed by the sorcerers who willed me among the Indians, seized at a place called Maraspan, And now, lo, it has befallen me, not straightforwardly but according to their misleading words."

They guarded him that day and early the next day they beheaded him with a sword. And thus was this wicked man eliminated. Then King Kawad maimed his brothers, hand and foot [thereby making them unfit to rule as king and], intending to spare their lives by such mutilation. However, they too were [later] put to the sword because of many complaints.

He now occupied the place of his father King Xosrov in the kingdom. [Kawad] was kind and merciful to all the lands and to his subjects, and he sought peace with his fellow kings. He sent all the men who had been imprisoned by his father at the court back to their homes and wrote letters to all parts of his realm bidding [the people] to live in joy and gladness. Everywhere in his kingdom he excused all royal taxes and fees for three years. And he tried to arrange it so that no one would need to gird his sword about him during his entire reign [g258]. However [Kawad's] good intentions were in vain and failed. [This was] because our own sins injured us—sins which were committed in leaderless and disordered times. [Kawad's] life came to an end after seven months, and the one who had killed his father was gathered to his fathers. As for the kingdom, it was about to be taken from the House of Sasan and given into the hands of the sons of Ishmael.

---

[69]

## 14.

### ***Concerning Viroy, head of the kat'oghikosate of Aghuania, and the great tribulations and the mercies of God.***

Everyone received forgiveness for their sins from the newly-crowned king Kawad, who then gave them still more gifts. Kawad treated with special kindness the prisoners and those who had been detained at the great court and had lost all hope of returning to their own lands and the places of their birth. At his order these eager folk were quickly sent to their patrimonial homes [g259].

Among them was the great *kat'oghikos* of the principality of Aghuania, Viroy. He was a brilliant and wise man, forceful in speaking wise words and having a tongue that resembled the pen of a ready writer when relating words of counsel and sensible words to kings and nobles. The humility of his speech was sweet to the ears of the common people and the masses. He would talk at great length, adapting the discourse of wise men and their parables, putting them in his own plain words and arranging them so that they were like pearls set in gold. He was especially skilled in translating the Persian language, which he had learned during his 25 years of detention at Xosrov's court. [Viroy] had been found guilty along with the rebellious grandee princes of Aghuania who had revolted against the king of Persia. Many of these [princes] had died, some by the sword, others mutilated, others exiled to distant lands. Viroy, however, had fled to the king's court. It was the Holy Cross that favored him and opened a path to the [Christian] queen's palace for him. [The queen], after exerting great efforts, was able to save his life as a present from the king. However, the king swore a mighty oath stipulating that [Viroy] should never return to his country all the years of his life [g260]. No, he would stay in detention at court. Nonetheless, [Xosrov] did not withhold from him the income (*has*) that was due to him from his princely throne, nor did he deprive him of the title of *kat'oghikos*. Instead, he kept him like some precious vessel, tending him like a swift horse primed for the day of battle, until the period of his exile had been fulfilled. Misfortunes and merciless torments at the hands of evil foes were visited on our land of Aghuania. [God] sent [Viroy] as once He sent Moses from Midian, that he might come and deliver his country and take it back from the hands of people who killed the men and violated the women, and [that he might]



rear the few children who remained in the country, one from each family and two from the city.

Now when [Viroy] left the court and came to the borders of the country of his birth, he fell down and kissed the doors and the floors of the churches in his diocese everywhere; he shed tears and wept, and kneeling down he watered the ground with his tears. Rising to his feet, he took courage and comforted those who were with him, thanking God who had freed him from the jaws of the lion and had permitted him to see again the roofs of the blessed churches. He planned to rest a short while and to satisfy the tender longing he had for his homeland after his long absence. But untold mourning, labor, and toil awaited him [g261], for soon he would see the destruction [of Aghuania].

[70] It was while [Viroy], spurred on by his love, travelled around the various localities where he had been raised, that it happened: the wind from the North [the Khazars] suddenly blew a second time and struck the great Eastern Sea [the Caspian]. The polluting beast [the Qaqan] came down with its bloodthirsty cub Shat'. First he turned his face toward the land of the Iberians/Georgians and the city of Tiflis. None of the brave men previously to be found among them was present now, and so [the Khazars] were able to vent the anger that had accumulated within them since the [time of the] insult they had previously endured. They besieged the city and fought and harassed the inhabitants. The latter turned and fought back and for two months worked and strived in vain against the sentence of death which faced them. Fear of their own bloodletting, a danger which was about to happen, terrified them. Then the frightful beast roared at them. It had hunted down and slaughtered enough for its brood. Now it came forth from its lair to hunt and it troops, to loot. Raising their swords, they all stormed the walls. They were able to go over the top by piling one on top of the other, their numbers were so great. A dark shadow of dread came upon the pitiful inhabitants of the city. The joints of their limbs were loosed [g262] and their arms grew weak. They were defeated, and drew back from the walls, terrified as sparrows trapped in the devices of hunters. No one had time to get home to warn his family of the horrible disaster, to instruct his beloved wife to care for the fruits of her womb, or to consider their duty as parents. Exhausted with fatigue and terror-stricken, they tried to hide themselves. Some hid on the rooftops and others in the drains, while many made for the sacred refuge of the churches and clung to the horns of the altar.

The cries of mothers lamenting for their sons rose up like the cries of a huge flock of sheep, like that of ewes calling to their lambs. They were followed by the merciless reapers, their hands shedding torrents of blood, their feet trampling on corpses, their eyes beholding the dead fall like a hail storm. When the wailing and groaning ended and no one was left alive, [the Khazars] knew that their swords had been satiated. They brought two princes—one a prince who was a governor for the Persian kingdom and the other a native Iberian/Georgian from the clan of the princes of the land—bound before the king [g263]. The latter ordered that their eyes be gouged out for having insulted his image, showing it as blind. With bitter tortures he strangled them to death, then flayed the skin from their bodies, stretched it, stood it up, filled it with straw and hanged it from the top of the wall.

Then [the Khazars] laid their hands on the chests full of treasure. The entire army, each man heavily laden, carried [loot] before their ruler and placed it in great heaps and piles. So much was brought before him that his eyes grew weary of looking at the countless number of gold and silver talents. As for the church ornaments, vessels set with pearls and jewels, who could ever describe them?

When he had accomplished what he wanted, [the Qaqan] ordered all the loot to be carried away. Departing with the treasure, he returned home, leaving his fighting forces in the hands of his son Shat' with brave men as his advisers. He ordered them to march to the land of the Aghuans, and he said: "If the grandees and leaders of their land come before my son and surrender their land into my service and surrender [g264] the towns and fortresses and markets to my army, in that case, allow them to live and serve me. If not, do not spare any man above the age of fifteen that your eyes fall upon, and you shall keep the boys and the women for me and yourselves as slaves and handmaidens."

The troops parted company and acted accordingly. They arrived at the area specified in his instructions and [Shat'] sent envoys in accordance with his father's wishes to the governing Persian prince named Semavshnasp who was the *marzpan* of Aghuania, and to the aforementioned *kat'oghikos* Viroy. But the Persian would not accept [the initiative]. "Who are you," he asked, "and why should I obey this order for the sake of the House of the Aghuans?" And taking his household belongings with him, he ravished many goods from the land and fled to Persian territory. When Viroy, the patriarch of Aghuania, heard that a heavy yoke had fallen upon their necks, he was troubled within himself. Now he distrusted and feared the king of Persia, for on a similar charge of rebellion he had been sent into exile and banishment for a long time [g265]. He wanted to obey the envoys and to go before the enemy to avoid the ruin and destruction of his land. In his shrewdness he wrote a letter to the king of Persia secretly disclosing the enemy's threats, and saying that if the king would allow, he would humor the enemy by submitting to him. If on the other hand [the Persian king] disapproved, he would leave the land.

[71] While he was waiting for an answer from the king, he wanted to delay the envoys sent by the enemy, and he bribed them with a little silver. He spoke with them using various [delaying] tactics. Sometimes he would say: "I shall summon the chief leaders of all the districts of the land so that they also might join me in formulating a reply to the message from your king." At other times he would say: "There is no need for me to wait for the views of the majority. I myself shall write a reply with gifts and honors befitting your king."

However, the messengers began to press him. "What are you waiting for?" they asked. "Why are you delaying? Behold, the day designated to begin raiding over the whole face of Aghuania has arrived. We have revealed to you the covert plans of our princes and our lord, Shat' [g266]. If you do not want to comply with his command, hurry and escape and flee. [We tell you this] because we ourselves have received honors and gifts from your hands. We fear our god, and we are not able to deceive you and watch the multitude of our troops raise their hands against you and your retinue and your people."

Now it happened that while they were saying these things, a dark fog [the Khazar invasion] suddenly enveloped the whole of our country, the plains and mountaintops, the hills and deep valleys. Not a single piece of ground remained untouched anywhere throughout the entire extent of our country, in the cultivated places or in the fields, in houses or along the roads. Every mouth cried "Alas! Vay!". The shouts of the barbarians did not die down and there was nowhere where the murderous clamor of the wicked enemy did not resound. This [invasion] took place at the very same hour and on one day! For they had planned it all in advance and had divided by lot among the different brigades the various districts and villages, ravines and rivers, springs and marshes, mountains and plains. At the designated time all of them together spread about looting, and they devoured our land. Our land shook from end to end.

The words of the prophet were fulfilled then and there: "As if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the [g267] house and leaned with his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him" [Amos 5. 19]. Just such days descended upon us. For as one might escape from the terrifying lion to fall into the flesh-rending claws of the murderous bear, those who escaped the sword fell into famine. Abandoned, paralysed, and starving, they were enslaved against their will and were stung by the sight of the bitter foe as though by the poison of snakes.

As the waves of that ocean engulfed us, [the Khazars] also pursued our *kat'oghikos* and overtook him in a rocky, stony place among the mountains, in the village of Koght'agarak. [The *kat'oghikos* Viroy] abandoned his baggage and belongings and the vessels of treasure, mounted a horse, and fled before them. Not one of his retinue was able to accompany him excepting a certain immigrant nobleman of this land. He was a strong, well-built man named Gadvshnasp from a family which held the rank of brigade-leader (*gundapet*) among his people. He alone managed to accompany him. Nor did the stones, rocks, and numerous ravines of the mountains of the districts of secure Artsakh deter the raids of the enemy. Our sins made difficulties easy for them. Without a stumble, their swift horses galloped over the mountain-tops.

[72] The enemy pursued the *kat'oghikos* and bitterly discharged their bows at him. But it happened that the [g268] marvellous grace of the Holy Cross which he had with him separated him and the enemy, and no hand was laid upon him that day. As the day waned, the fugitives prayed for the darkness of night rather than the light of day. The road to salvation was that night opened to the great patriarch and all the survivors. The enemy's envoys came again, and said [on behalf of their prince]: "Do what I have already commanded and you and your House and all the survivors of your country shall live. But if you refuse, I have ordered that you to be seized and brought before me against your will." The *kat'oghikos* assembled by him all the chiefs, sons of the great royalty of the land, the district chiefs, and the village chiefs, priests, deacons, scribes, and all met at the time appointed in the fortress of Ch'araberd. And he said to them: "Men and brothers! You yourselves know the tremendous blows, the fear and the trembling [we have endured] before the insatiable and merciless sword which was sent down upon us because of our sins and suddenly drowned us. Now we are in doubt and do not know who to turn to or where to flee before their faces. Whether we do as he wants or not, the day of our death at their hands is still ever present before our eyes [g269]. Quickly give me your answer and tell me what you think is good, for the messenger who has come presses me. Moreover, he is not of the common people, but is a lord in the enemy's army and the trusted *dayeak* (tutor) and governor of the king's son Shat'."

When he had said this, they called out together: "Why do you speak so, our lord, and mock our wretched selves? Is there any of us wiser than you, that we should know what is wise and should give advice? Who would dare to open his mouth before you and utter words of wisdom? However, if humane God will bear with us, do not hesitate to protect us as a good shepherd, and for this we shall protect you to the extent that we are able." [*Kat'oghikos* Viroy] said to them: "If the Lord alone approves, I will not fear them. Now do as I say. Let each of you bring as much silver and gold and clothing as he is able. Do not be stingy in your hearts, for with our gifts we may be able to soften his countenance."

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book Two

---

#### 14. [Continued from previous page]

[73] Thereupon everybody gladly brought these things and placed them before him. [Viroy] himself took much from his own treasure, whatever was fitting as a contribution to their gifts. He asked the tutor of the king's son who came [g270] to him to provide him with the names of the grandees, the princes, generals, lords, and chiefs of the various tribes in the entire army in order of precedence, that he might know in what way to honor them with riches. He separated the goods according to the names of their clans and sealed them with writing. Then he ordered them to be carried by porters and carts. To those who were with him he said: "I think it would be proper for all of you, excepting the lower classes, to go in person with me to the foreigners' camp in order that your submission, and mine, should be quite clear to them." When they heard this, many followed him willingly, but a few were faint-hearted and stayed behind. [Viroy] allowed this and did not force anyone. Rather, he blessed those coming with him, saying: "Take courage, my sons, and do not be afraid. Our guide is the truth of the Holy Spirit, the rod of Moses, and the grace of the Holy Cross of Christ, and they will force back the wide waves of the sea before us." He started out and walked at their head. They passed along the mountain valleys and emerged into the fair, level and fertile plain of the district of Uti. They were unable to recognize the place because of the numberless multitude of Shat's troops. Just as once [the waters] in the midst of the Red [g271] Sea [rose about the Jews, so here], to the right and left of them all the way to the court of the king's son the innumerable army bordered them like a wall. They found [Shat'] encamped in the same district to the north, close to the great city of Partaw among the many swamps.

When they arrived at his court, they saw grandees and lords before him. There we observed them kneeling on their couches like rows of heavily-laden camels. Each had a bowl full of the flesh of unclean animals, and bowls containing salt water into which they dipped their food. There were silver cups and beakers chased in gold which they brought from the plunder of Tiflis. They also had drinking horns and very large utensils shaped like ladles (*shoromadzevs*) with which they lapped up their broth and similar greasy, cold, unwashed abominations. With two or three of them to one cup, they [drank] greedily and like animals, pouring unmixed wine or the [fermented] milk of camels or horses into their insatiable bellies which resembled bloated skins. They did not have the customary cup-bearers before them nor servants behind them. Even the king's son lacked [such attendants] except for those soldiers [g272] who watchfully guarded his court armed with shields and spears.

[74] They brought inside [our Aghuanian delegation] and [the Aghuans] passed from one guard [gate] to the next. We carried on our arms the gifts of greeting [and we walked] behind the *kat'oghikos*. Then [Khazar guards] ran before him. They ordered all to step forward and to kiss the ground three times. Keeping the others at the second door and taking the gifts from them in their own arms, they led the *kat'oghikos* by himself to the innermost tent where the king's son sat. Entering his presence, the *kat'oghikos* kissed the ground before him and gave gifts to him and to all the grandees. Shat' took him by the hand and greatly rejoiced to see him arrive with such a multitude, and he ordered him to sit near him in the tent. Scrutinizing

the face of the *kat'oghikos* for some time, he said: "You are my father, and your face is like the face of God. Why did you delay coming to me? You could have avoided the disaster that my troops have now inflicted on your land. But now that you have come, orders shall be issued in my name to all the soldiers in my army to return to their camps, and to no longer conduct raids in the confines of your country. The whole army shall heed your word. I shall swear an oath on the sun [g273] of my father Jebu Xak'an that whatever you request of me I shall grant without fail. Now order the whole of your principality to return to their homes and their endeavors. I shall raid the lands around you and shall bring the loot and booty and store it inside your territory. In place of this one destructive raid [the Khazars made on Aghuania], I shall repay you double in men and beasts, for my father has received these three lands—of the Aghuanians and the Lp'ink' and Ch'oray—as his royal patrimony in perpetuity." The *kat'oghikos* arose, revered him, and said: "We are the servants of your father and yourself, I and all the inhabitants of this country. Spare us your servants and turn your sword from us that we may serve your father and yourself in the same way that we served the Sassanians." When this had been said, through the power of the Holy Cross the great wrath of the beast-like people and their lords and soldiers was soothed in the *kat'oghikos*' presence. They became as tame as lambs and like pious believers in God towards beloved brothers and like-minded fellow citizens and neighbors. They invoked the name of the *kat'oghikos* in the same manner as their king's son, namely, *God Shat'* and *God kat'oghikos*. Those who had come with him they styled *dear brother* [g274].

Then they were ordered to sit and eat with them. [The Khazars] had them kneel down just as they themselves did and they placed before them vessels full of unclean meat. Now they did not want to eat since it was then the time of the Lenten fast, and the Khazars respected the wishes of the servants of God, removed the meat, and placed before them a few thin slices of bread fried in a pan. Giving thanks to God, [the Aghuans] blessed it and broke it, and ate it to please them. After the meal, [Shat'] ordered that the *kat'oghikos* be sent on his way with his people in great honor that he go to the city and live in his own house at ease. From that day forth [*kat'oghikos* Viroy] was often a visitor to their camp, both when they were on the move and when they were resting. Once [the Khazars] had grown to trust him, he grew bolder and began making requests to the king's son: "My lord, since we are your servants, let me tell you something which is to your own benefit. Do not allow the country to be ruined and turned into a wasteland. Rather, send trustworthy officials everywhere, to the hamlets, fields, fortresses and villages, so that all the inhabitants of this country may return and work without fear, being protected by these officials against any violence on the part of your troops. Since you and your father have plainly received this country in service, let your grandees and yourself lend an ear [g275] to my requests. Order the release of all those captured by your soldiers and detained in their tents, men and women, girls and youths, so that fathers may not be separated from their sons and mothers from their daughters. Otherwise, [the people] will scatter over the land like tender hinds before those who hunt their calves."

[75] In this way, with mild and suppliant words which flowed from his spiritual wisdom, [Viroy] inclined their hearts to his requests. The order was issued by the king's son to all his troops to release all the prisoners and not to dare to prevent their return or to conceal them. For if they dared to do this, they would be subject to very severe punishment. [Shat'] sent distinguished men from among those who were close to him—[officials] called *t'ndiwn* [*tudun*]s—to accompany the *kat'oghikos*' attendants. Then they arose and went through their camps, searching through their tents and pavillions. They removed and extricated young boys who had been hidden among the baggage or the pack-animals and took them away. No one dared to resist them. Assembling them in groups, they brought them to the palace of the *kat'oghikos*. And there [*kat'oghikos* Viroy] cared for them like a hen caring for her chicks. He clothed the naked, fed the hungry, and sent them all back to their homes. The grace of the Lord was with him and aided him in all his thoughts and deeds [g276]. Moreover, his name was glorified among the multitude of the enemy until the day God visited his people and delivered them from their hands.

*About the famine, sword, and captivity which occurred together.*

It is fitting and proper for us now to recall the time of troubles occasioned by famine when the voracious rat swarmed between our feet, ate up the plants, and exhausted all the fruits of our fields. Three frightful generals—Famine, the Sword, and Death—came together to work in concert and simultaneously. They spread great terror abroad, wounding mercilessly and slaughtering widely. One was not even found worthy to partake of communion for the forgiveness of one's sins, for the Sword restricted it, Famine choked it, and Death strangled it. Oh, the bitterness of the times! Alas, our poor eyes which had to behold [g277] such great tribulations! The wretched survivors begged the mountains to fall on them. They were terrified and startled at the mere rustle of a leaf. In this time of troubles, even in the days of the Lenten fasts, they indiscriminately ate the meat of unclean carrion and the roots of plants. Indeed, they stripped trees of their bark and twigs and chewed them. But they derived no strength from what they ate. The miserable people were even forced to grind and eat the dried pips of grapes. A multitude of starving people gathered together and fell upon such people who had something, wrenching their food from them with threats. And so they too died among the impoverished. Hungry eyes were always greedily watching for a chance to rob their comrades. I heard the following from reliable men: "We saw some people eat the limbs of dead folk, old ox-skins, grimy pouches, and they cut the shanks from boots and boiled them and ate them."

[76] We can find nothing to compare with our misfortunes anywhere with the exception of the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian and Titus. We stepped over the corpses of those who had died of starvation and which, black and swollen, covered the fields as thick as stones on the bed of a river. The word [g278] of the prophet was fulfilled: "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass" [Jer. 22. 19] and "No one shall break bread for the mourner" [Jer. 16. 7]. When the green shoots [of spring] began to appear, yet more people died than during all the days of winter. Let whoever is still capable of hearing and comprehending know that towards the end of the famine a disease unlike any other spread throughout the land. Those who were infected by this disease became crazy for the space of one month or two. They would grind and gnash their teeth, and roll their eyes. Nor did they comprehend that they were sick, and they even did not know how to ask for water. Some, like frantic madmen, rose naked and shameless from their bed, talked to the walls, and beat the air, while others mistreated their nurses. Although the illness was severe, death was not the result. They called it madness. Those afflicted grew black and thin, their bodies wasted away, their limbs were paralysed, and their hair and beard fell out. I lamented and mourned these unbelievable disasters for many days, praying to All-merciful God to bring these unbearable afflictions to an end.

I Viroy, *kat'oghikos* of Aghuania, Lp'ink', and Ch'oray [g279], will avoid mentioning all the other ghastly things—the blackened bodies, the baldness of the heads—for here too the meaning of the prophet should be obvious: "I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth upon all loins and baldness on every head" [Amos 8. 10]. When God had caused all His wishes to be fulfilled, He remembered [humanity] as he remembered Noah in his ark among the waters of the flood. He had mercy on them and granted their requests. He sent fullness to their bodies, satisfied the hungry, and filled the needy with good things. This was so that, enjoying these things, [the people] might multiply their praises to God.

---

[77]

*About the great miracles which avenged us of our enemies.*

In the second year of Artashir, son of Kawat, king of Persia, while [Artashir] still ruled the kingdom as he pleased, the prince of the North grew stronger and threatening in all his orders. He spread horror and dread [g280] over the face of the earth. He sent his officials to various craftsmen skilled in the use of gold and silver

and in the mining of iron and copper. He demanded a exact reckoning from the merchants and fishers of the great rivers Kur and Araxes, as well as didrachms in accordance with the census of the Persian kingdom. When he had examined all the produce of the land and satisfied himself that nothing had been hidden from him, he decided to invade the land of Armenia in the summer time and subjugate it and its neighbors too. He selected about 3,000 warriors from his army and a prince of theirs called Chorpan T'arxan, a bold and bloodthirsty man, and sent them in advance to prepare a safe path for him and to collect information concerning the proud Persian general who still held Palestine. After refreshing the multitude of his troops, he himself followed a short distance behind.

When the prince reached his vanguard in the land of Armenia, he learned that the Persian general was marching against him [g281], and he went to earth like a serpent, lying in ambush and holding the road before him. News reached Shahrvaraz about what the enemy was planning and where their fearless vanguard troops had been deployed to meet him. Making an announcement in the midst of his troops, [General Shahrvaraz] suggested that they should depose the Sassanian family and make him king. "Look around you and understand, oh Houses of Persia, that you are nothing without me, who destroyed the son of Rome. Now I have turned towards the East and have commanded my brave men to trample beneath the hooves of their horses the people who have descended from the North, from Gothland. [The Sasanian king Artashir] is a suckling child and a plaything in [the Sasanian family's] hands. They put their trust in him and press him to their breast like a child born to their family. But he will not protect them. [The Persians] have fallen and been defeated by a few. [The victorious Khazars], knowing that you are depopulated, have set their hearts on inheriting the glories of the land of the Aryans."

After he said this, [Shahrvaraz] proudly addressed one of the brave men of his army named Honah, the prince of the Arab cavalry brigade: "Arise now and go through [the army]. Select from it your own brigade of about ten thousand valiant men. Then march against [the Khazars] [g282]. Do not wait to choose a battlefield, do not draw up your forces in battle array, and do not draw your sword from its scabbard as though seeking vengeance from the enemy. Do this so that [the Khazars] may not boast to their people that they were defeated by the sword. Rather, trample them beneath the hooves and chests of your horses, and scatter them like dust in the wind. Do this and other things so that, having destroyed their front, you may advance and penetrate as far as the king and his camp. Battle with him alone. And when you have completely destroyed them, call the place of battle the 'grave of the enemies.' Behold, this is what I say to you."

[78] When [Shahrvaraz's candidate, Honah,] this proudest of men, heard [these words] from [Shahrvaraz] he swelled up even more. He arose proudly, reviewed his troops, and then went against the enemy. Now when the enemy became informed about his approach, they laid an ambush on the road and awaited his arrival. [The other] half of their army was drawn up ready to confront [the Persians]. When the two armies clashed, [the Khazars] immediately took flight before them. At that point [those Khazar troops in the ambush] jumped out at [the Persians] from all sides. [The Khazars] surrounded [the Persian brigade] like fire attacking rushes on the banks of Lake Gegham [Lake Sevan]. They did not spare a single one of them, nor was even one man left to bring the bad news [about the deaths] of so many men. Truly, their pride had turned back on them [g283], for Man does not become strong through his own power. It is God Who makes his opponent weak.

[The Khazars] plundered the corpses and gathered up the ornaments of [the Persians'] horses, [the army's] lances, gold-plated swords, shields, and costly robes skillfully dyed and fashioned by the Byzantines. Then they shared this entire pile among themselves. In accordance with their custom, they slit the ears of the beautiful horses and cut their nostrils, docked their mane and forelock, and cut the tail, skin and bone, down to a cubit in length, thus disfiguring them to make them look like pack-mules.

When this arrogance [of the Persians] had also been punished, every warrior, every man who wore a sword at his side, realized that the authority of kings and the power of generals was as nothing before them.

Then the cauldron of the North turned his face against his own sons and fought them, visiting the fullness of his anger on his young cubs and punishing one [crime] a thousandfold and two, ten thousandfold.

Now that I have begun to speak about the fearful and terrible retribution visited upon our enemies, my thoughts search among many [Biblical] texts [g284]. Was there an example of a deed which might outdo the drownings of Pharaoh, the raising of Moses' hands like a cross to smite Amalech, the massacres of Gideon, the titanic valor of the son of Jesse, the terrible fear which seized the Assyrians in the night, and the like? But now let us return to the thread of our narrative again, for the Lord performed great things for us and we have not yet comprehended them.

[The Khazars] advanced through the passes of the three lands of Armenia, Iberia/Georgia, and Aghuania. When they halted there, terrible news arrived from the destructive lion of the north, Jebu Xak'an himself, for his insatiable cub Shat': "Brigands have pounced on me," he said, "and you shall never see my face again. For instead of securing [my conquests], I expanded my kingdom [into lands] unsuitable for me. And so, my arrogance has caused me to fall from my lofty station. Do not stop to destroy the people who are with you, but try to escape from them. Otherwise they, learning what has developed, may make haste to tear you to shreds. Alas, I am lost and have become childless [g285].



# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book Two

---

[79]

#### 17.

***How the Mihrakan clan, which derived from the line of Xosrov the Sasanian, became head of the Aghuan Houses.***

We have learned from accurate and reliable historians that the brothers Bndoy and Vstam, relatives of the Persian king, arose against King Ormizd, father of Xosrov, and slew him. [Bndoy and Vstam], and one of their kinsmen followed their sister's son Xosrov, son of Ormizd when they fled to Byzantine territory to escape from Vahram, called Ch'obin [Bahram VI Chobin, 590-591]. They came to Maurice, emperor of the Byzantines. [Emperor Maurice], making Xosrov his son-in-law, sent him back with many troops. And he came and took back his kingdom.

Many years later, [Xosrov] avenged the blood of his father Ormizd. [For this, he] destroyed his mother's two brothers Bndoy and Vstam and about sixty men of the same line. [As a consequence of this] Mihran, a kinsman of Xosrov, took flight, united under him certain regions of the land, and passed into Aghuania taking about 30,000 families with him. He arrived in the district of Uti close to the great city of Partaw. Then he wanted to enter Khazar territory and join these enemies [of Persia]. Meanwhile, King Xosrov's [g286] dignitaries were blaming the king and asking: "Why do you not concern yourself about Mihran, who is your own kinsman and who, out of fear of you, has ranged himself with your enemies and stirs up trouble against you?" [Xosrov] immediately wrote a humble letter to Mihran, saying: "My brother, my true brother, do not depart from me in hostility. If you are not satisfied living here with me, then make that country which your feet have reached and where this letter finds you your home."

The message reached [Mihran] in the mountainous district of Gardman. He took it, read it, and was filled with joy. Seeing the goodness of the land, he was content to dwell there. And he built a city there, calling it Mihrawan after his own his name.

When spring had arrived, [Mihran] went to the upper regions of the district of Gardman and treacherously invited twelve of its chief men to visit him. He put them to the sword, and ruled over that land. A long time afterwards, he passed away in peace. He had a son Aramaye'l, who was the father of Vard, who was the father of Vardan the Brave (*K'aj*). The latter built the fortress of Gardman in three years. With treachery in his heart, [Vardan] affectionately invited the Er'anshahiks—who belonged to the original Armenian (*Haykazean*) line and whom we mentioned earlier in this history—as if to a banquet [g287]. He prepared for them the bread of perdition, and gave it to them to eat. At that feast of their own blood [Vardan Mihrakan] beheaded sixty men. He spared only Zarmihr Er'anshahik, who was married to one of their own clan members. In this way [the Mihranids] came to rule Aghuania. [Vardan] also subjugated the savage peoples of

the Caucasus.

[Vardan Mihrakan] died in peace. He fathered a son Vard, who fathered Varazman, and the princess Shushik, and Varaz-Grigor, the first prince of Aghuania, who was baptized by Viroy, *kat'oghikos* of Aghuania. Varaz-Grigor had four sons, namely, Varaz-P'eroz, Juanshir, Yezut-Xosrov, and Varazman. May this [account] be found pertinent.

---

[80]

## 18.

### ***The deeds and valor of the great prince Juanshir, second son of Varaz-Grigor, who demonstrated bravery and courage among the Persians.***

Four years after the death of the great Xosrov, king of Persia, his son Yazdgird [g288] ruled as king. Now it happened that at this time the race of Hagar [the Arabs], an alliance of ten clans, had grown powerful. [Their army] crossed the land of Asorestan and swiftly marched against the king of the Persians coming there from a distant clime in a bold and terrifying mass like a whirlwind blowing over the desert. Then those [leaders] who were subject to the Persian kingdom—generals and princes, lords and indigenous nobles of the various regions—massed together to march against the foreign enemy.

At the time of these events, Varaz-Grigor, prince of Aghuania, being himself a noble of the clan of Artashir, observed that his second son Juanshir was proud, dignified, handsome [and young, since] a beard had scarcely begun to grow on his face. [Juanshir] was beloved by his father, skilled in the art of war, swift as an eagle to pounce, and successful in all his endeavors. And he was trusted by his father. [The father] had resolved to assist him in the ways of the world, so that he be on equal terms with grandees, and [be able to] serve before kings. Consequently, [Varaz-Grigor] thought it best to send [Juanshir], of all his sons, in his own stead to the court of the king. Taking a brigade from his father, [Juanshir] arrived at the common meeting-place of thousands [g289] prior to the [arrival of the] prince of Siwnik' and the *sparapet* of Armenia. When the general R'ostam saw him, he looked upon him as a brother or a son. [Juanshir] was popular with everyone.

The general took many thousands of cavalry and proceeded to Ctesiphon to King Yazdgird. [General R'ostam] brought the young Juanshir into [King Yazdgird's] presence. The king immediately laid his hands on his head, praised him, and named him *sparapet* (commander-in-chief of the army) of Aghuania. Then the general took all the Persian troops and descended into the Asorestan country. Crossing the Tigris River, he arrived in the district of Veh Kawat. Proudly putting his trust in his immense and innumerable army, [General R'ostam] haughtily expected to trample all the Southerners underfoot. He camped facing them on the other side of the Dead Water. When the [Persian] troops advanced, the *sparapet* of Aghuania went along [g290], met [the enemy] and demonstrated great bravery. Slaying some [Arabs] at the very start, he became yet more confident, for he knew that the Lord was with him. After a few days, in the month of Mehekan, on Christmas Day, 30,000 cavalry and 10,000 infantry deployed against [the Arabs]. The sons of Hagar, coming from Katshan [? al-Qadisiya] with a multitude of cavalry and 20,000 infantry, sped forward covered with shields and eager to fight against the Persian troops.

[81] Now it came about that the *sparapet* of Aghuania, who had entered the fray with his powerful men, struck down two of his opponents, but then withdrew with three grievous wounds, while his horse had been wounded in four places. The enemy chased after him with frenzied hostility as far as the river. [There], still fighting back, [Juanshir] jumped in and swam across. His clothes were covered with gore and his weapons with blood. Seeing that all the grandees and soldiers were mowed down like grass, he hastened to the court of the king. Now when the king was told of his feats of bravery and his grave wounds, he ordered that he be given a palace and that he be tended by the court physicians. And [Juanshir] was greatly received in the land.

When he had recovered, he came before the king who placed his hands on his head and spoke well of him for everyone to hear. [King Yazdgird] bestowed on him the insignia of a general, with clarions to announce him and two golden spears and two shields worked in gold which were always carried before him. He honored him above all others. Around his waist he wrapped a belt of gold studded with pearls, and [gave him] a sword of wrought gold. For his arms there were bracelets, and [the king] placed a coveted diadem on his head. He gave him also leggings sewn with pearls, and as many pearls again [on necklace(s)] around his neck. They clothed him [g291] in a dark tunic with four hems, and taffeta and silken Persian coats with fringes of spun gold. They ordered that he be given villages in service to him and rivers full of fish. All these things were seen to be, in the words of the scriptures, "the glorious fruit of righteousness" [Heb. 12. 11]. After receiving such royal honors, he made even greater advances.

It happened that two generals named Imay and Ahmatan were in bitter conflict with each other, and [Juanshir] struck down and prostrated one of them in the presence of all, thereby, like a wise man, inducing them to keep the peace. General Xor'azat received him with great esteem because of this. Now in the eighth year of Yazdgird the enemy rose again and besieged the king in Ctesiphon for six months. General Xor'azat and the *sparapet* of Aghuania marched with the troops against the enemy. Lifting up his eyes [to Heaven], the brave Juanshir went forth with 3,000 men, and driving them back by his vigorous assaults, he crossed the river. Nor did he permit them to cross the Tigris for six months. Meanwhile the king was taken to the Great Dastakert [for safety]. But in a terrifying mass the enemy swarmed [g292] upon him, and so from there they transferred the king to Bekghagh. However, the children of Hagar [i.e. the Arabs], like the waves of the sea in their tremendous violence, followed along in pursuit. Standing firm for a few days, the *sparapet* of Aghuania did not cease to march against them and to demonstrate his personal bravery for all to see. Often he brought back and threw before the king the heads of the foreign foe.

After this, while the armies battled one another, the Lord visited the army of the Persians with a cruel defeat at the completion of their allotted time [as rulers]. [The Arabs], following a command from On High, came and destroyed their kingdom. Now the brave Juanshir fought for seven years in those difficult battles until, having received eleven grievous wounds, he took leave of them and retired to the district of Atrpatakan. Now the military commander of the Persians, seeing how glorious [Juanshir's] name had become, pressured him to marry his sister. Juanshir, however, not wanting to take a wife from among the unbelievers, returned to his own country. At this his loving father was overjoyed, like the patriarch Jacob on seeing the first-born of Rachel. Thus did he embrace his son, and the color of his face was enhanced by the silver bloom of his hair [g293].

---

[82]

## 19.

### ***Concerning the sparapetut'iwn of Juanshir, his victories over the Persians, the death of Yazdgird, and Juanshir's submission to the emperor of Byzantium.***

The most glorious and renowned Juanshir returned from the Persian wars and assumed the leadership of the entire House of Aghuania, issuing commands as a king would. Taking his brigade and his father with him, he retreated above the city of Peroz Kawat. The Persian braves marched against our land because of Juanshir's revolt. While the vanguard of the enemy quickly invaded the lower regions of the same district, he hurriedly took up arms. [Juanshir], with his own hand, struck down a certain Giwghmnazgi (? Gilani), leader of the army. And he and his soldiers killed many of the [Iranian army's] men with their bloodthirsty swords. Having taken many prisoners and horses and mules and much booty he retreated. But the Persian army did not stop pursuing him. There was another clash between them in the hills, and on that day also [Juanshir] was favored by the Lord and was triumphant [g294]. However, the bad news reached him that the Persian army had

entered [the city of] Peroz Kawat and taken his mother and brothers captive. Truly, I say, he raged like a bear bereft of its young, and he swiftly returned across his patrimonial holdings to the other side of the Kur River, to the district of Kapichan. There he gave battle, not rashly, but with great prudence and planning. Fighting courageously, he received a wound on the head, but with the aid of the mighty right hand of Christ he showed himself so fierce and powerful that not a single one of the enemy remained alive. They were all slain. After this [Juanshir] went and rested on the borders of Iberia/Georgia, having added to his renown. There the most honorable Atrnerseh, the prince of that land, who held three titles of the Byzantine Empire, came and personally bandaged his wounds, holding the victory won by his great valor a cause for celebration. They concluded an inviolable treaty of peace. Then Juanshir, taking the Iberian/Georgian army to help him, advanced swiftly into the district of Uti and wherever he found a Persian soldier, he killed him. He likewise quickly and with concern attacked [g295] the city of his winter residence and freed his [two] brothers who were born from the same womb as he and about his own age.

After this [the Persians] began to pour more troops into Atrpatakan, but [Juanshir] was not perturbed. It was his nature to be bolder in the face of many than in the face of few. In two battles in the district of Shakashen he killed many commanders of a thousand soldiers ("chiliarchs") together with their armies with revengeful blows. It is unnecessary to describe the innumerable victories Juanshir enjoyed over the Persians in one place and another.

When the lords of the lands of Armenia and Iberia/Georgia saw [his triumphs], they wanted to give him a wife from their own lines. However, [Juanshir] chose a wife from the Aruichan clan, the daughter of the prince of the Sisakanian land, which made [the people of] Siwnik' eternally happy.

[83] Now when the Persian general learned about his great defeat at the hands of Juanshir and the destruction of his troops, he became converted to a love of peace. He wrote a letter which he sent through the great prince of Siwnik' swearing a mighty oath to persuade [Juanshir] to be his ally. It was with difficulty, however, that the intermediary persuaded him to be reconciled and make peace with the Persians. He sealed [the agreement] solemnly, however, and returned, while the *sparapet* of Aghuania came back to his own land [g296] with his mother and brothers.

[Juanshir] now reflected on the decline of the great Persian kingdom, the independence of the first Eastern kings, and his own regal splendor. As a result he decided never again to place the fate of his principality in another's hands. A Persian general, however, boldly sought to rule independently over each region, and Juanshir and his brothers arose and went to their patrimonial district. The Persian general treacherously summoned his father to him on some pretext to make him his vassal, and he sent troops and appointed governors for the state of Aghuania.

What then do the brave Juanshir and his elder brother do? Since these were men undaunted and eager for vengeance, they put on their swords, mounted their swift horses, and taking a short cut, approached the city of Peroz Kawat from behind. They took their first sleep hidden in an ox-stall in a forested area near the city. At sunrise they galloped in like young lion- cubs, and ravaged the city cruelly punishing everyone they found there and in other regions who were under the command of the Persian general. With their troops they inflicted great defeats upon the Persians until the the latter surrendered their father safe and sound [g297].

It was in the twentieth year of Yazdgird that the kingdom of the Persians was completely destroyed, that is, in the thirty-first year of the worldwide wars of the Hagarites and the fifteenth year of my lord, Juanshir.

Thus did the Tachiks (Arabs) attack the lands of the North and East. They compelled the tribal chiefs to surrender the fortresses to them and took their wives and children as hostages to prevent rebellion from them. When Juanshir observed the cruel scourge from the South, he deceived them for a short time. He crossed to the other side of the river, where his fearless heart flamed and burned to do battle with them again and to deliver his father. But his father forbade this and went voluntarily [to submit] to the enemy. The most wise

Juanser pledged an oath with the Armenian general and was encouraged to submit to the Byzantine emperor. Entering the brotherly union, he wrote to the Byzantine emperor a letter with the following import [g298].

---

[84]

## 20.

### *Juanshir's letter to Constantine [Constans II, 641-668], emperor of the Byzantines.*

"Juanshir, *sparapet* and prince of Aghuania, together with his vassal land of the East, humbly and reverentially greets you, O all-conquering lord, powerful and merciful emperor of the Byzantines, Constantine Augustus, whom God has appointed to be ruler of land and sea. May it be agreeable to your Christian lordship to accept this new offer of vassalage from a distant people so that God-given benevolence be bestowed from your great dignity and glory on our humble selves who seek a crown [from you]."

When this letter was brought to the most pious emperor, he was overcome with joy. He gave a great banquet that day, and immediately ordered treaties to be drawn up providing for mutual peace. He gave [Juanshir] very great gifts: a throne carved in silver with a gilded back, robes woven with gold, and the very sword with pearl-studded scabbard which he himself wore. He made him a first patrician (*pr'oton patrik*), and ordered the titles of patrician, consul (*hipatut'ean*) [g299], ex-prefect (*aphiwpak'osut'ean*), general (*stratelatut'ean*), and *illustris* (*elistut'ean*) sufficient for 12,000 men be taken [to Juanshir] so that he could bestow them on whomever he chose. He also took a fragment of the redeeming Cross of Christ, which he always wore on his bosom, and sent it to him.

---

## 21.

### *Text of the document [of Constans II's reply].*

"To you, Lord Juanshir, lord of Gardman and prince of Aghuania, ex-consul and first patrician and governor in the East, the grace and the mercy of the redeeming Cross of divine power [is given,] as is a loving greeting from our august kingdom.

We have received your letter of greeting, which has shown us your pious love for the worship of God, and we are glad that you and your eastern land have agreed to be our vassal. In return for this we and our sons shall treat you and your descendants with affection and sincere and indestructible love from generation to generation for ever [g300]."

When [Juanshir] heard the contents of the letter, he rejoiced exceedingly. He gave thanks above all for the arrival of the all-powerful Cross, and prostrating himself before it, he glorified God, the giver of all good things. Then the *kat'oghhikos* of Aghuania came forward with the bishops and a multitude of prominent people bearing flowers, and blessing that precious gift. After this, time was not wasted with improper speech, in drunkenness, or in [performing] comedies (*katakergut'iwnk'*), rather [they enjoyed] discreet entertainments. When [Juanshir] had secluded himself for the night for sleep, [he did not sleep]; rather, he meditated on the good of his land. When the morning star arose, he put on his royal robes and sat on the throne. The doors [of the court] were opened and the soldiers entered bearing their arms. They ranged themselves around him on either side. The prominent people then entered, in order of rank, awestruck. In his court, righteous judgement and incorruptible justice was meted out to the people, one and all. All day long [Juanshir] occupied himself with national problems, not with licentious pleasures. He wisely brought the wild peoples around Mount Caucasus to their senses. And thus it was that he was absolute sovereign and lord [over territory] from the borders of Iberia/Georgia to the Gate of the Huns and [g301] the Arax River.

## 22.

*The Byzantine emperor comes to Persia and summons Juanshir.*

Constantine [Constans II], Heraclius' grandson, in the nineteenth year of his reign, came with a multitude of troops and very select Byzantine [military] leaders to the kingdom of Persia. He planned to wrest from the Arabs parts of this land and he carried with him the radiant light of the world [ *i.e.*, the Cross of Christ]. He sent one of his chiefs to Juanshir so that he would come to meet him. [Juanshir] made haste and arrived in the land of the Medes and into the presence of the great emperor. [The emperor], hearing of [Juanshir's] arrival, came to meet and welcome him in person at the village of K'ungr. [Emperor Constantine] commanded [Juanshir] at the same time to put off the mourning clothes he was wearing because of his wife's death; and they dressed him in royal robes [g302]. Emboldened by this, [Juanshir] asked the emperor for a piece of the Cross of the Eternal King.

[The emperor] took the Sun of Salvation, and cut off a piece in his presence and gave him this cauterizer of sins, saying: "Let this be a tower of strength for yourself and your sons against the Enemy" [cf. Ps. 60. 4 = A.V. 61. 3]. Seeing him receive such heavenly gifts, the Armenian nobles and General Hamazasp were very jealous, but [Juanshir] did not care about this at all. Then he bid his benevolent lord goodbye. [Constans II] dismissed him not as a servant, but as a brother of equal rank [in the war] against the Persians. The Ayraratean (Armenian) nobles accompanied him back to his own land, amazed at God's indulgence towards him. Learning of his approach, the joyous patriarch of Aghuania, Uxtane's, with a large multitude, blessed him in a loud voice, saying: "Behold, the Lord has sent us from Zion a staff of strength, and through him we shall triumph over our enemies!"

The brilliant Juanshir now pondered the question of finding a place of rest for the Cross of the Lord. Thus he laid the foundation for a house of God in his native district of Gardman, at the fortress, richly adorning it in joy and to the glory of Christ God.

When spring arrived, the esteemed prince of Aghuania [g303] prepared to meet the emperor once again in the town of Vagharshapat. The emperor ordered the grandees of the palace and the notables to go to meet him, and thus did [Juanshir] enter into the emperor's court like a king. When he saw him, the emperor greeted him with a fond embrace and assigned him a place above all the nobles. That day was a blessed holy day for him, surrounded by all sorts of gold and silver ornaments. Constantine ordered whatever was placed on the royal table to be offered to him, a gesture which amazed his other table companions. Over and above all this, he girt about him the royal belt of his valiant grandfather Heraclius and his grandmother Nicetas, gave him his own robe and two banners, and conferred the rank of patrician on his young sons. All the villages and regions which had belonged to the first kings of Aghuania he gave to him as an inheritance from generation to generation, and he appointed him to govern all the Eastern people as king.

No plan of the emperor was concealed from him. The emperor, listening to his many intelligent suggestions, was amazed and complimented him, saying: "You and I are alike in heart and soul; return in peace." Thus honored [g304], [Juanshir] ecstatically returned to his own land where he commanded everyone to build, sow, prosper, and live in peace. He constructed many palaces, and by the grace of God he did not lack whatever men find fair and beautiful. Even the king of Turkestan sought peace and friendship with him and presented him with choice horses, male and female servants, and various skins of reptiles. From the districts of Asorestan and Atrpatakan, from the Ayrarat areas and the land of Georgia, even from India, people came to see and hear him. [Juanshir's] intelligence and wisdom and his humble love for all those who came to him

became a wonderful legend in every land. All this came to him entirely from Wood of Life, which rendered his name famous throughout the entire universe, and the blessing of the provident Father [g305].

---

[86]

## 23.

### ***Concerning the raid of the Khazars and their defeat by Juanshir on the far side of the Kur River.***

After this, when two years had passed, the Khazars arose and came to the land of Aghuania to pillage and loot. The prince of Aghuania took up arms, went before the all-conquering symbol [of the Cross], fell on his knees, and sang the psalm of the king of Israel: "Lord, take hold of shield and buckler, and rise for my help against my pursuers" [Ps. 24. 2, 3 = A.V. 35. 2, 3]. Taking his brigade, he crossed to the other side of the great Kur River. There he joined battle with them, and his prayer was not ignored. For although his fleet-footed horse stumbled and threw him in the thick of battle, he was not killed, for the Lord helped him and raised him up. And when he rose, he killed his opponent. On that day too [Juanshir] enjoyed a great victory, and he said to those barbarian people: "Depart, go back through the gate of Choray and do not return, for the Lord has prevented you from taking [this land] [g306]."

---

## 24.

### ***The completion of the temple of the Lord in the fortress of Gardman and its dedication by Juanshir; it is consecrated, and the Cross of Christ is erected in it.***

Two years after Juanshir's triumph over the Khazars and the expulsion of their troops, the well-proportioned edifice of the temple in the name of God was completed. When he had built it, Juanshir fell down before the everlasting light and prayed: "O Lord, come now to Your place of rest, which I have built in Your name as a shelter for the life-giving Wood." Then he took the *kat'oghikos* and his bishops and all the lords and journeyed for a day to the north of the town of Peroz Kawat. There, falling on his knees, he prayed first in a monastery which he had built in a untouched area between two districts, well equipped as a resting-place both for himself and others who came that way. And he issued an edict about this, saying: "Let no one [who wishes] to stay here be [considered] unacceptable by you." Departing from there with a great multitude, he entered the district of Gardman on the eleventh day of the month of Arats' [November 21, 663] [g307], and taking the Cross of Light, he put it to rest in the house he had built for it. He knelt down there and with bitter contrition and tears he prayed to the Creator of all things, saying:

---

[87]

## 25.

### ***The prayer of Juanshir.***

"Lord, my Lord, since You have overlooked the many sinful deeds of Your servant and have granted me this [portion of the] Cross from which, fastened by nails, You did hang on earth, send into this temple the grace of Your Holy Spirit, and adorn and beautify it as You did the temple of Solomon, and [envelop it] with the thick cloud of Your spiritual glory. Make it a house for the prayers and supplications for us who dwell on the shores of the Eastern sea. Let it be that whoever worships Your countenance with offerings in this place may be heard by You from On

High and his prayers be granted. If this entire land of Aghuania come with one accord to glorify Your name in this house, may You by the divine power of the Cross close the gates of the enemies and stop the bandits in their battles [g308]. Command a sweet breeze to blow through this land so that the vine and the fig-tree and all the plants of the fields may bear fruit in abundant fertility and remain undisturbed in this beloved land.

As for me, Juanshir, burdened with sin, as I have willingly placed all my trust in the aid of Your almighty Cross—the way a poor sick man puts his trust in a good physician—O Lord, do not send me away empty-handed and confounded. Make this house which I have built a roof over my head on the day of battle. Humble him who exalts himself above me. Make my sons and daughters free of all fear of evil and strong in all things. And You, Lord, my Lord, who has preserved me since my childhood, saved me from the temptations which surrounded me, who gave me gold and silver and servants and handmaidens in abundance, now permit me to watch over my dominions like a king. Receive me, Your servant, with kindness and pour over my descendants the wisdom of following in Your paths and fearlessly submitting to the emperor of Byzantium whom You have crowned.

And on the day of the general Resurrection, when the invisible replace the visible and the sound of trumpets calls the sleeping from their sleep and the fiery hosts assemble before You, Almighty King, from the ends of the earth, then [g309], through the guidance of Your Cross in which I have placed all my trust, have mercy on me and my wife Xosrovanush, my forefathers, especially my silver-haired father Varaz-Grigor and my mother Goriduxt, my brothers Varaz-P'eroz and Yezut-Xosrov, and my children. Do not harshly punish and severely chastize me, Juanshir, who have shed tears like the renowned David, for what is my blood worth to You if I fall into corruption? O Christ, deliver me from eternal temptations and in return for the temple which I have built in Your name on earth, prepare for me, sinner that I am, a spiritual abode in the mansion of Your Father."

When he had finished this prayer, he offered up the gifts prepared for this marvellous service, and he swore an oath of salvation: "May this be a place where my sons and I lay the first fruits before the Lord and receive Your mercy." Then he descended with his good and holy news into his winter residence, the city of Peroz Kawat, and he rested an entire year in peace [g310].



# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book Two

---

[88]

#### 26.

#### *Juanshir's alliance with the Huns and his establishment of friendship with his enemies.*

The following year, while the valiant Juanshir still sat on his throne in peace, the winter solstice arrived and the king of the Huns invaded with many thousands of cavalry. Although Juanshir had previously ordered that the land should be guarded and fortified against him, the Hun looters crossed to this side of the Kur River taking captives and the flocks and herds which were at winter pasture. [The Huns took] not only those from [Juanshir's] native lands but from areas by the banks of the Arax River, and from the districts of Ayrarat and Siwnik'. [The prisoners and flocks] were led off and assembled at [the Huns'] camp.

Then the king of the Huns wanted to look at Juanshir's face. Thus he sent his brothers to beg him to come and see him and to establish brotherly love between them. It did not even occur to the brave and valiant Lord [Juanshir] to be afraid or to consider which of the kings of Persia had ever been able to behold the king of Turkestan in person [g311]. [Juanshir], fearlessly prostrating himself before the Cross of Salvation, said: "Though I walk through the shadows of death, I will fear no evil, for You, O Lord, are with me" [Ps. 22. 4 = A.V. 23. 4]. [Juanshir] went to them with his royal retinue. The king of the Huns came to meet him in a boat, and proceeding to this side of the river, he stopped at the river bank beside the deep and gently-flowing water. They concluded a peace treaty to put an end to disagreement between them and above all that they might be bound together as two like-minded brothers. Sealing the *dawil*, each returned to his own place.

But what did my stout-hearted lord do on the very next day? With seventeen men he crossed to the far side of the river to the camp of the Huns. There he married the king's daughter. [Moreover, he] brought back a herd of 120,000 sheep, 7,000 horses and oxen from the Huns' booty, and no less than 1,200 prisoners. He returned home in peace with a joyous heart. Then he wept before the Lord, calling upon him and saying: "I have not trusted in my bow, but You, O Lord, have saved us, and in You I boast, Lord" [Ps. 43, 6, 7, 8 = A.V. 44. 6, 7, 8]. Then he ordered trustworthy men to distribute that which he had retrieved of the plunder, to each according to his share [g312]. This was done. And lo, [this transpired] two years before his thirtieth year as ruler and *sparapet*. Three quarters of this period, [that is,] from his youth to the middle of his manhood he performed praiseworthy, world-famous, intrepid feats of valor, first among the Persians and then at the gates of the Huns until he and his bravery became known to East and West, North and South, to Aryans and non-Aryans [*i.e.*, those within and those without the Iranian culture-world]. And now I shall undertake to describe how that grace-giving Cross caused light to shine on him from darkness and let him pluck flowers from fire.

***You shall find here [a description of] what great honors the king of the South gave to [Juanshir] the prince of the East.***

The eternal mountains and the fathomless, billowing seas are subject to the Word of God, for it is His command from On High when He contemplates the earth [g313] that makes it tremble; when He approaches the mountains, smoke issues forth, and even now towering hills are flattened and levelled by the countenance of the Lord, and the furious transports of the waters of the surging deep withdraw within themselves. Thus was the awesome glory of the Persian lordship humbled, and its proud, unbounded heights sucked into the abyss. The winged voices of the deep were silenced by the fury of the winds, and the thorns of the field, flying through the air, came and lived on the waves of the wide ocean; for as the multitude of waters flood the earth with their furious waves, so the emperors of the Byzantines with their massed armies spread their multitudes thickly over the entire world.

Now, however, the lofty power of that throne had sunk so low that the forests of men in its control were caught in the shadow of that which choked like Gideon's thorns and which the descendants of the tyrants, stifled among them, could not shift even slightly. When the ram of the West [the Byzantine emperor (Heraclius, 659-681)] saw that the Lord had withdrawn His aid from his sword and that the savage wild boar grew fierce and ground his horn [g314], he interpreted this to be the fulfilment of the time foretold by the prophecy and promise to Abraham: "the hands of Ishmael will be against all men, and the hand of all men against him" [Gen. 16. 12], and "before him, a devouring flame, and behind him, a burning flame" [Joel 2. 3].

Then the emperor of the Byzantines took the remnants of his army and hurried across sea and land and passed within the borders of the distant islands of the West. This was the sixth year of the transferral to the land of Syria of the [seat of the] kingdom of the Southerners. For after they had left the land of the handmaid [Hagar] they established their seat of government in Damascus. And then [the caliph, (Mu'awiya, 661-680)] he who sat there, began to suck the marrow of the country around him. Given to him [the caliph] were strong and extensive powers, political wisdom, lenient authority, and human kindness, and with these four qualities he ruled the four corners of the earth. [Juanshir] observed how the emperor of Byzantium had been rendered powerless and weak by the king of the South, who had consumed [the latter's] populous markets and cities like a flame.

[Seeing these developments] the great prince of the East, Juanshir, was greatly worried about the fate of his realm. He had a feeling that the multitude from the South might capture his land and trample it underfoot. Although he was able to summon the numberless forces of Turkestanis to his aid [g315], he nonetheless took the initiative to submit to the yoke of vassalage of the king of the South. When the tyrant of the South heard of the goodwill and reverence in which the emperor of the Byzantines held our prince and that—by reason of his physical marriage ties with the peoples of Turkestan—he could call them or restrain them as he wished, an uncontrollable envy was kindled in the mind of the proud conqueror of the world. [The caliph] sent reliable messengers with mighty oaths and promises of countless gifts if only [Juanshir] would go to him.

[90] Then [Juanshir], putting his faith in the virtues of the Cross of Christ, prepared magnificent presents and took them to salute the conqueror of the world. First he entered the house of the Lord which he had built in the fortress of Gardman as his refuge. There, with profound sighs, he sought the visitation of the knower of secrets in the words of the great David: "O creator of justice and righteousness, deliver me not into the hands of my oppressors" [Ps. 118. 121 = A.V. 119. 121]. He armed himself with such thoughts and took leave of the all-conquering light. And thus he set out for the distant land. The Armenian general and all the lords came out to meet him and received him with pleasure and joy and sent him on his way in great honor. Now when [Juanshir] descended into the country of the Asorestanis [g316], he observed that, lo, at the command of the caliph ("king"), the chiefs of the districts and the wealthy folk of the cities honored him, each in their

particular borders. Horses and lodging places were readied [for him *en route*] up to the caliph's court, where he arrived in great splendor.

Then [Juanshir] ordered the grandees of his retinue to go before him and lead the horses on [one of] which the king himself was mounted. Thus in glorious pomp did they enter the camp where many troops were assembled. The multitude, hearing his illustrious name, thronged to see him on the road. The king of the South gladly rose from his sleep at dawn before his usual hour to receive and warmly greet the prince of the East. [The caliph was] greatly pleased at his arrival. [Juanshir] enjoyed a fully prepared reception. Indeed, [the caliph] did not accord such royal honors to any of the governors of the country. This was especially the case when he had tested [Juanshir's] intelligence and reason; for though lords and leaders of many peoples were there in his service, in none of them had he such sure confidence as in Juanshir, on whom, and on those with him, he bestowed very great gifts. After this the prince of the East asked [g317] to be allowed to take his leave in peace. The ruler of the South set his seal to a treaty of sincere and perpetual friendship and gave him his right hand, although it had never been the custom of the haughty lord of the earth to give it to any other foreigner.

After these events [Juanshir] was sent on his way with high honors from the [court] encampment (*marzaran*). He arrived in the district of Ayrarat where he was received by the brave Grigor of the Mamikonean clan and all the nobles. Grigor took him to his town of Aruch. Anastas [I, Akor'ets'i, 661-667], the great patriarch of Armenia and the pure dove and pillar of the Church, also went there. When the prince, a man of great faith, saw [Anastas] he was filled with spiritual joy and delight, and he humbled himself and was blessed by him as by a holy angel. In the same magnificence he descended into the district of Gardman. There he immediately entered under the roof of his refuge [*i.e.*, the church he had built there] and began to use all sorts of precious materials for the ornamentation of the wondrous beauty of its ineffable light. He appointed decorators to work on it and had it painted from dome to doorpost, embellishing it with gold and silks, and the door of the chamber containing the Light of the World [the fragment of the Cross] he commanded to be covered in silver work. After this [g318] the illustrious prince Juanshir remained completely faithful to the king of the South for three years.

---

[91]

## 28.

### ***Juanshir goes a second time to the tyrant of the South; his wise aid to the Greeks, and the halving of the tribute.***

Once again the king of the South summoned the respectable prince of the East, Juanshir, with an invitation promising many gifts to augment his previous honors and glory. For it came about that at this time some prominent citizens of the city of Byzantium had come to him [the caliph] to accept the yoke of taxation from the sons of Hagar. Now because the eunuchs had undertaken to kill Constans in the seventh year of his reign, the caliph had ordered them to remain where they were until the arrival of the prince of the East. The most praiseworthy Lord Juanshir arrived with his previous retinue [g319] and was welcomed with more reverence and esteem than on the previous occasion. Indeed, [the caliph] commanded that the palace of his own brother be prepared for [Juanshir's] repose and that he always be seated with him at table. [The caliph] then ordered [Juanshir] to conduct peace talks with the honorable gentlemen who had come from the imperial city. The caliph was greatly amazed at his judicious and profound knowledge, and the ambassadors from the kingdom of Byzantium were likewise grateful to him, for [Juanshir] tried in many ways to advise the caliph to their advantage.

After this, the king of the South ordered the prince of the East to be honored even more greatly, like a

crowned monarch. [The caliph] presented [Juanshir] with that proud, well-trained, gigantic beast from India, the elephant, with which the courts of kings are adorned in awe-inspiring magnificence. From the beginning of time down to the present day [the elephant] has never been known to have been given as a gift to minor dignitaries. Then [the caliph] gave [Juanshir] a parrot, the most honored of all birds, and one which in former times was seen outside the wild only in the kingdom of the Byzantines [g320]. [The caliph] also gave other gifts along with these: a steel, gold-plated sword studded with many pearls, gorgeous robes embroidered with gold thread, silks, brocades, true purple dyes, beautiful purple robes, all the wonderful dyes known of old and still known at the present time, and fifty-two fast horses which the king himself had ridden.

He also ordered the first of his wives to send to the lady of the East some marvellously beautiful adornments fit for queens, [including] silken and gold-embroidered clothing. [The caliph also] commanded that each member of [Juanshir's] entourage be given enough brocades and feathers for fifty men. He placed under [Juanshir's] rule the principality of Siwnestan [Siwnik'], and also pressured him to rule over the people of Atrpatakan beyond the river. However, [Juanshir] would not agree to rule with absolute power over these regions of the world. He renounced this additional honor, and in his natural constructive virtue, which benefited his land, [Juanshir] preferred to devote his thoughts to the task of helping his own land.

[Juanshir] then began to request that the tribute, which weighed heavily on his realm, be lessened. The king of the South granted this request with pleasure, and ordered the yoke of tribute to be reduced by [g321] one-third.

[92] [The caliph,] after granting these magnificent favors whereby he honored him more than all the other princes, again gave him his right hand and dismissed him with honor. [Juanshir] arrived in his own land and hurried to the house of the Lord. There he prostrated himself and praised the ineffable gifts of God, saying: "From God is my power and my glory." From there he descended into the capital (*ostan*) where he dwelled during the cold of winter. And it was there that he convened a national assembly at which we saw him—not merely with his usual measure of glory, but beautifully dressed in even greater royal magnificence. We also saw the royal bird [the parrot] which was of a most desirable type. In its yellow feathers a faint green hue mingled and shimmered, and the reddish color of its breast was interspersed here and there around its neck by colors which harmonized with each other like dew-drops hanging like pearls from the golden ears of corn in the fields on a morning in spring. So too were the pupils of its eyes. Its thick beak curved over its mouth, and in this the sharp tip of its tongue, jutting up like a tooth, spoke continually in a voice much like a human [g322] voice. As [parrots] in former times had sung the praises of a certain emperor Nero in his chamber, so in these latter days we saw [this parrot] glorify our most fortunate prince. Although the astonishment [the parrot] generated was great, it was not so great as that caused by what I am now about to describe. For we saw, among the attractions of the feast, the elephant—that malicious, clumsy animal which was as big as an enormous boulder—ambling along towards the end of the royal procession outside the wall on the road to the entrance gate, as though [it had come] to pay homage to the king. Its beam-like legs supported what seemed like a mountain, and its trunk, hanging down from its forehead, was like a vicious snake. [The elephant] would swirl [its trunk] along the ground, turn it this way and that, and point up in the air, or it would nuzzle itself with it, and then expel its breath with a terrifying roaring sound through the nostrils. Truly I say that a horrible fear and trembling seized a man's soul at the sight of that behemoth-like head turning this way and that. We saw horses ride by, superb and splendidly adorned, walking, trotting, galloping, and executing charges swift as the wind, caparisoned in saddles worked with gold and [protected by] shining armor [g323].

Now what shall I describe, what shall I narrate? It was through divine providence that [Juanshir] was destined for glory and greatness from his very birth. Furthermore, to the present day the Lord has exalted him to be most glorious in everything. For this reason we regarded him as no less than a king, enjoying all manner of riches—much gold, silver, precious purple robes and beautiful clothes, valuable jewels, and glowing pearls. And everything was full to overflowing. During these thirty-three years the Lord gave great honor to the victorious prince of Aghuania, and he was also greatly respected and exalted by the kings who ruled the four [major] nations [of the world]. These tyrants regarded [Juanshir] as no less than they. In all things he was

noble and great. No one childishly or foolishly thought to slight his rule because he did not wear on his head a crown, that supreme symbol of royal grandeur.

For us, his most humble servants, [Juanshir] will be great, not like an Augustus or Tiberius Caesar, but because of the wonderful excellence of his most gracious benevolence. [He resembled] the blessed Constantine who was glorified and honored with a heavenly crown [g324]. Yes, truly it was for you, most exalted prince of the East, that we, who have gathered together, will do whatever our Lord Jesus Christ, who made you our Lord Theodorus, might ask of you—renouncing sins, loving God, fearing Him and walking in His paths, that He may be good to you and to your sons from generation to generation for ever.

---

[93]

## 29.

### ***The vision of Israyel, hermit and man of God, concerning St. Mashtots' and his martyred students and the discovery of the holy cross which was at Gis.***

I have found this accurate but somewhat brief account of the monkhood of Israyel. The beginning of [the account] is rather obscure. We have included here only that which concerns our purpose. Now after [Israyel] had spent an entire year on the mountain, he happened to be sleeping on the ground, on his knees, when a marvellous and astonishing vision appeared to him in the fourth hour [g325]. It was shining with light and giving off a sweet fragrance which filled and enchanted his nostrils. It increased his wisdom and taught him to recall all the mystical revelations which had appeared in past times and also the teaching of the Gospels which had been given to us—when and how [such visions] were received, by what sort of men, who and where they were from who had fought with their blood and inherited the name of martyr, where they had received the divine treasure, and what he himself now had to do. When all this had been said to him once and then a second time, [Israyel] awoke and for a full hour [remained there] terrified. Then he arose and was joyful and spread his arms out before the Lord and gratefully performed his morning prayers.

Now on the following day he recalled the words from Scripture which say: "Woe to him who negligently performs the work of the Lord" [Jer. 48. 10]. Consequently, he hurried and descended the mountain. Taking his servant along with him, [Israyel] he quickly arrived at [the settlement] where the bishop was located. He explained to the bishop with great caution and in detail what he had seen in the mysterious vision. [Israyel] said: "My lord, let us not delay [g326] in performing God's commands, lest we be judged like those who deny Him. Let us quickly and zealously carry out this task and bring the divine treasures to light." Bishop Dawit', overseer of [the area called] Mets Koghmank', listened to all this and deliberated for an hour. He decided to take with him certain of the pious chorepiscopi and accompanied by them he went to the patriarch of the Aghuans, Uxtane's, and narrated to him what had transpired. When [Uxtane's] heard this he joyously praised the Lord and asked: "How did he become worthy of this mystery?" Therefore the *kat'oghikos* [Uxtane's] ordered that a great assembly be convened. However the *kat'oghikos* and the bishop Dawit' were reproached by one of the attendees, the bold man named Yove'l, who was bishop of the Artsakh area known as Mets Irank'. [Yove'l demanded to know:] "Why have you heeded such idle words about a fantastic vision which the Scriptures teach us to disbelieve? For after the teachings of the Apostles and the evangelists, such things have not been seen. They cannot have been seen now." [This man] was full of profound knowledge and well versed in Biblical writings.

[94] The saintly patriarch responded to him as follows [g327]:

"What you say may be understood from the Bible, but since the account of this vision is something new and unusual, it is also possible that it comes from God. It could be, then, that those of us who fight against it may be judged with those who deny Him. We must not oppose it

lest we be regarded as people who oppose God. It is improper to reject the appearance after the Apostles' [era] of all [such] holy things, including the Blessed Cross, together with the divine hidden treasures which in these latter times have been revealed by men's visions. [Such phenomena] have occurred in diverse places—in the holy city of Jerusalem, in many cities with which the universe is now filled, and the churches made glorious. Indeed, here in this very land of Aghuania relics of the saints have come to light in various places. Nor is this any new wonder which has been discovered, for there is not a single one of the treasures of God which He will forever conceal in the earth. It is in no way proper to reject truth along with falsehood and deceit, and to consider the work of God the temptations of Satan. Instead one needs to examine the matter properly and interpret it correctly, as the holy Apostle, says: "Test everything; hold fast what is good" [I Thess. 5. 21]. And again in the General Epistle it says: "Believe not every spirit, but choose the spirit which is of God" [I John 4. 1].

Go now, you bishops who have inherited these regions, and let each of you undertake to supervise the search [g328]. Beseech God even more to find out whether this vision comes from Him or whether it is some pagan foolishness. For the temptations of Satan and the deception of men are evident, but the grace of God is still more so. Inform us daily how the Lord God reveals the mystery to you in that place."

The two bishops Dawit' and Yove'l willingly accepted the patriarch's command. Taking their leave, they went guided by the Holy Spirit to R'ostak in the district of Mets Koghmank', to the field in Ch'ghax valley shaped like a racecourse, on the banks of the Trtu (Terter) River in the diocese of Mets Irank'. They went and pitched camp in the noteworthy grove on the little elevation in that hilly place. There stood a chapel made of wood and reinforced with brick, its walls adorned with crosses and shining studs. When news of this spread, honorable folk—chorepiscopi, priests, deacons, district chiefs of hundreds (*hariwraworats' gawar'apetk'*), chiefs and grandee officials (*glxawork' ew metsamets gortsakalk'*), and a multitude of men and women of the people—arrived immediately in haste and gathered together that they might all participate in beholding the wonders of God [g329].

[95] The bishops then ordered this solemn assembly to observe fasting and praying for three days, for there was not a small amount of dissension among them [about this undertaking]. Half of them believed [in Israye'l's vision] while the other half did not. Indeed, even the chief bishop Yove'l thought [the vision] had been delusional. At the end of the three-day fast, the abbot Israye'l took the spade in hand. Everyone fell on their knees while [Israye'l] looked fixedly at the designated spot. He ordered them to dig there without delay. Participating in this work were many people who scooped out the earth with articles of clothing. However, they grew exhausted from their labor and did not find the great and desirable treasure. Then from the eastern side they began excavating the wooden chapel where the altar for the sin-remitting mass to the Lord was located. Applying themselves to the search, they dug under the altar to a depth of about three cubits. And then, lo! an extremely sweet smell of the most marvellous fragrance wafted forth from that place and filled the air with its rich and pleasant odor. This fell sweetly on the senses of the multitude for it resembled the rare perfume of thousands of incenses and flowers. Everyone was astounded. When they had dug down to a depth of ten spans, they came upon two [g330] silver caskets with lead seals on them. There was a solid gold tablet attached [to this find], and on the tablet was Syrian and Armenian writing. Since this miracle of God had occurred publicly and in the presence of many people, great amazement spread through all the people. They crowded together to see the reliquaries of the saints, for [the people were] aflame with faith and love for the saints.

The faces of those who had witnessed these things reflected their sincere joy and delight. Similarly those blessed Christ-loving men, the bishops, were astonished at the divine miracles and, with many blessings and thanksgivings, they praised these ineffable gifts of God. As a result, that man of God, Israye'l, was greatly revered by the bishops and the people because of his holy merit.

Then the bishops, with Israye'l and the honored priests, withdrew from the others. They broke the signet seal on the blessed caskets and discovered a relic of the Cross of Salvation. The archdeacon of the chorepiscopus read the inscription on the gold tablet. The writing said: "These are part of the relics of the Jerusalem saints [g331]." And when Yove'l, bishop of Mets Iran'k', saw this holy sign, his wisdom budded and flowered abundantly. He praised and thanked the Lord with all his heart and acknowledged the truth of the abbot [Israye'l]'s vision, and exalted him in the presence of all. And thus [Yove'l] now supported what he formerly opposed and sought to destroy. For in this matter he considered himself sinful and guilty because of his previous hostility. Now because the place where the life-giving light was concealed had been predestined to be in his state, [Yove'l] would not permit it to be given to one who comes and passes on again [, a mere visitor such as Israye'l]. Instead, he made himself its administrator and guardian as though it were his own personal treasure. Revering one of the caskets, he took it off to his bishopric. However [Israye'l], the man of God, was extremely displeased at this, for it was proper that the holy things of God which had been entrusted to him by God and which he himself had found should be under his care. But in keeping with his humility, he consented for a time and complained to no one. Instead, he took the remaining casket with the consent of the bishop Dawit' and the chorepiscopi and the priests and ministers of the Lord and the whole people, and they carried it to his dwelling [g332]. Then with psalms and hymns of praise they laid the holy things of the Lord to rest in the holy church of Glxoy Vank' (Monastery of the Head) amid shining lanterns and burning candles. And exchanging sincere farewells, they returned to their homes [g333].

---

[96]

## 30-31.

### *[Texts of ecclesiastical letters.]*

We omit the translation of these chapters [pp. g333-g338], which deal with spiritual and doctrinal matters. C. J. F. Dowsett's fine translation of chapters 30 and 31 is available [here](#).

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book Two

---

[97]

#### 32.

##### *The Aghuan lords form contaminating marriage ties and are accursed.*

In this period the chiefs of Aghuania contaminated their lines by contracting wicked liasons. And thus they became abominable. First was the House of the lord of Koght', which was of royal blood. This [same practise] was adopted by three Houses in the district of Arshakashe'n, of Dastaker, Chnshmi, and Mamshegh. Beyond the Kur [River] [it was adopted] by the House of Hejeri; in Gis in the district of Uti by the House of Varaz Peroz which held the honor of *ghak'nar* [? court steward]; [it was also adopted by] the *spasatu* [? a court functionary of some type] Varazhan who sat at Arazhakan; and by the House of Tuerak. The venerable patriarch Uxtane's cursed them for such wicked lasciviousness and impious marriages. Since they would not turn back from their evil ways, all of them were exterminated from the face of the earth. After this the blessed patriarch [Uxtane's] was translated to Christ and was succeeded on his throne by Eghiazar, a pious and noble man. He was the bishop of Shak'i, and had been present at the assembly of bishops which was called upon the death of Uxtane's. As [Eghiazar] went into the assembly, certain vicious folk maliciously slandered him. After the morning service, [those opposed to Eghiazar] chose a certain monk [g339] who was abbot of the monastery in the city of Peroz Kawad, with the intention of making him the *kat'oghikos*. However an evil spirit knocked him to the ground, condemning him in the sight of everyone. Then they cast lots as was once done for Matthias [Acts I. 26]. [This time] the humble Eghiazar received the apostolic dignity from that assembly. Meanwhile, in this unstable [secular] life, the fortunate Juanshir held lordship of the land, in accordance with God's will.

---

#### 33.

##### *The holy man of God Israye'l becomes a priest; a narrative account of the discovery of the Holy Cross.*

This venerable man was a source of light who gave his sweet [spiritual] waters to many folk to drink. He waged a constant battle against the enemy Enebay (?) which is the custom of virtuous, brave, and select champions [of the faith]. He too, since he was greatly renowned [g340] for his justice in the land, released the sweet perfume of the Holy of Holies on the senses of many folk. As a result, the bishop Dawit', being directed by the Holy Spirit, bestowed the priesthood on him and ordained him. This was so that he might have authority to save lost souls like the great Peter had done and to offer up the immaculate sacrifice like Aaron, and that those near and far might rejoice with him and receive the blessing of his holy right hand. Indeed, this



was such a wonderful and marvellous happenstance that it seemed incredible to many. Day by day such things were fulfilled in him in accordance with divine providence. These words of the Apostle applied to [Israye'l]: "And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified" [Rom. 8. 30].

[98] A month after this the holy priest, at the inspiration of a providential command from On High, conceived a fervent desire to find the desirable cross which Saint Mastots' had hidden in the village called Gis in the district of Uti. Because [Israye'l] was the first of the good brothers to receive this loving command, out of consideration for all men he bore the divine truth in secret. Furthermore, considering the good of all [g341], he did not publicly disclose his secret plan, but tried to flee from the praise of men and to shun ambitious and vainglorious passions.

Now [Israye'l] asked only one of the reverend priests nursed in holiness to follow him in his search, since he did not want to travel with a crowd of people. He arrived with him in the aforementioned place, that is, at the old church. However, he was not able to discover the exact site [of the relics]. Then, immediately, over the cypresses which surrounded the church on all sides, an astonishing sign appeared. It shone in the shape of a fiery arch. When this approached the dome of the church it completely covered it like a cloud and then gleamed brightly over the tops of the cypresses, like a rainbow. Then [the light] began to flash like lightning. And so [the light] illuminated the solid stone and brick-lined top [of the church's dome] where the Cross of Christ lay. The saintly man of God then realized that indeed, the treasure lay there undisturbed. [Israye'l] took a spade in his hand, and stripped to his shirt like the brave Abraham, and with his companion he began to dig in the place indicated. When the hole was about five hands deep, a silver chest came to light [g342], mildewed and tarnished and bearing an inscription in Armenian, Greek (*hor'om*, "Roman/Latin" ), and Syriac to the effect that a fragment of the life-giving Cross lay inside. And inside, plated in silver embellished with gold but now dull, was found a cross made of the immortal Cross of Christ.

Then this man of God was overjoyed. He burned much incense and rejoiced with spiritual joy, and he sang songs, associating himself with David the living harp: "I shall bless the Lord at all times" [Ps. 33. 2 = A.V. 34. 1]; [he did this] because God granted him His awe-inspiring Cross which will save us from the enemy forever. Reverently he carried the Cross of salvation to his church. In those days the appearance of the Cross and its arrival at its [final] resting place generated much wonder and amazement, and thus it was impossible to keep silent about the awesome, great glory of God. As Cyril, who was patriarch of Jerusalem, says when writing to Constantine concerning the appearance of the Cross: "the rays of light shining down upon the Mount of Olives did not appear to one or two alone, but were clearly visible to the eyes of all the inhabitants of the city" [g343]. This is how it was with the appearance of the Cross of light to this land of the East. For one and all saw the intense light shining in all its brilliance among the clouds in the sky. Everyone saw the coming, ascent and descent of grace on the most holy Cross. Sometimes it assumed the form of fire, sometimes of light, sometimes it was in the shape of the morning star. Not one person only but the entire land observed its radiance. Moreover, it was seen not only from the city, but in all the surrounding widespread villages and towns by men and women, by shepherds in the hills and in the fields and those grazing their flocks in the lowlands, by the farmers in the plains who gathered their fruits for the benefit of the land, and by many travellers out in the open air. It was in the fifth hour of the night that everyone witnessed the shining miracle, and many hastened in awe and with quick steps to watch the display and stood around in many groups. They satisfied their innermost desire and kissed the holy Cross of Christ, thereby receiving grace and mercy from the beloved instrument [of torture]. Thus did they receive the gifts of [Christ's] splendid victory. Many of the chiefs of the various districts of the land had come for the Feast of the Lord's Cross [g344], and on account of these mighty and astounding signs which appeared over the Cross no one dared enter under his roof that night, or stay anywhere in the city. Instead, they all went up into the hilly places and prayed throughout the night until morning. When the sun rose, they entered the church portico and stood before the Cross in fear and awe, and then celebrated the eve of the Feast of the Cross with a sacrificial offering on the altar.

[99] After the appearance of these marvels, the powerful Cross, this great tower which had received the body

of God blossomed and flowered again. It was this [same] Cross with which God deemed us worthy to believe and which encompasses us, the provident work of His creation, for our protection, the staff and rod of salvation given us by God which for us drew aside the veil of knowledge of God. The hosts of scribes and the ranks of children of the covenant [the Jews] remained without this knowledge since the mystery was concealed from them.

When the servitor learned from God that the Cross was in the old church, he quickly and eagerly went to the church of Glxoy vank' (Monastery of the Head) in the district of Mets Kuenits'. There he saw the blessed Israye'l [g345]. He fell down at his feet and related to him the entirety of the vision [which he had seen], and begged him to interpret its meaning for him. [Israye'l], however, would not agree to explain the mystery, and so the man returned to his own place. Now it happened that on the next day, the same vision was repeated to this man, and this time a manuscript was used as a [visible] sign [that it was indeed a vision]. Taking [the manuscript], the man went and gave it to the man of God [Israye'l]. Now when the Saint saw this he realized that indeed this [phenomenon] was inspired from On High, and so he explained its meaning to the man and even showed him [a fragment] of the life-giving Cross. [Israye'l] made him swear not to reveal this to anyone. Even though he had sworn such an oath, in a few days he broke his word. He went and told his story to the *kat'oghikos* and to many others, for it is not fitting to conceal the truth. At this the patriarch Eghiazar was astonished at the glad tidings which came to him as if it was a gift. Meanwhile Prince Juanshir sent a letter to Israye'l ordering him to immediately bring the miraculously rediscovered Cross of Christ to him.

[Israye'l] obeyed the command of the patriarch and quickly went to the holy church. The great prince and the holy patriarch also arrived there accompanied by all [g346] the grandees. They clearly saw the Cross of Christ shining anew, the Cross which the blessed Mashtots' had placed in the reliquary with his own hands and with which he converted the land of the Aghuans from its erring idol-worship by illumination from the font of grace. Worshipping the holy Cross they returned again, praising the giver of such a desirable gift with the greatest joy.

After this Israye'l, the priest of God, was exalted before the *kat'oghikos*, the prince, and the grandees. He received an order from them to perform everything [that was to be done] boldly. After a few days [Israye'l] desired [to memorialize] those cypress trees over which such great marvels and wonders had appeared many times by consecrating [a monument celebrating their role in the discovery] the Lord's Cross. He summoned skilled craftsmen and bade them fashion [from some of the trees] a cross with carved reliefs depicting the acts of the Lord.

[100] Now when the chief bishop and Juanshir heard about this they wrote immediately to the man of God, Israye'l, asking to participate in the service for the dedication and consecration of the Cross. The priest of the Lord happily agreed to this and made preparations [g347] for the consecration of the glorious image of the Cross. [The *kat'oghikos* and Juanshir], however, idled and were travelling too slowly, whereupon God sent a vision to the blessed patriarch Eghiazar exhorting him not to delay and be late for the consecration of the Cross of Christ. Eghiazar got up early in the morning and made haste to the appointed church in the diocese of the state (*nahang*) of Gisawan.

At this time the great prince [Juanshir] was travelling to the southern areas, to the district of the Sisawanats'. And the patriarch Eghiazar was like the Apostles in word and deed. He vengefully expelled new [doctrinal] delusions and caused truth to flourish, and he became worthy of the crown of glory as protector of all seeking virtue in orthodoxy, teaching them always to worship the Trinity in three distinct Persons. He later made known to the fortunate man Israye'l that it was through his piety that the marvellous vision had been revealed to him. And thus he received him as a servant of God. With [Israye'l's] consent, [Eghiazar] took a fragment from Mashtots' holy Cross and placed it inside the newly fashioned wooden Cross. Then he anointed the Cross with chrism and erected it in [g348] the middle of the church, consecrating it in a joyous ceremony full of pomp and splendor in the presence of the clergy and the congregation of believers.

---

*The death of the great prince Juanshir.*

At that time [ca. 680] the great prince Juanshir set out for the mountain regions for recreation during the annual celebrations, and he was happily surveying the land. With the skilled minstrels (*gusans*) let us lament the much-lauded and beloved Juanshir, the acclaimed general who in his versatile wisdom subjected all men to his authority, being blessed with all the good things of this world, [a man who] was proud of his intellectual prowess. Afterwards, however, the beloved and glorious man became vain and empty and was stripped of these glories by the snares of vice [g349], for he transgressed the commandments of the Lord. And then, behold, everything turned into a spider's web [cf. Job 8, 14], and the wonderful splendor quickly disappeared. In the swelteringly hot days the remarkable leader took his retinue of nobles and his *Namesakan* brigade into the valleys between the high mountains. There they walked among the beautiful flower covered meadows enjoying themselves in peace, and spending the days in happiness and luxury.

When the scorchingly hot days of summer had passed and the time of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross arrived, [Juanshir] arose from these places and came to the city of Partaw in the district of Uti. There he entered his own beautifully decorated temple to worship God with offerings and adoration in solemn service. Now while the renowned Juanshir was resting happily, a certain evil and malicious man, who was tainted with the sin of Cain and had fallen into evil temptations and had similarly corrupted his comrades, did not remember [Juanshir's] love or the honors and gifts he had bestowed on his father's House. Instead, [this assassin] evilly plotted his death. He enticed him into lascivious behavior and persuaded him with deceitful words to abandon himself to obscene pleasures [g350]. In the first hour of night when the prince emerged from his palace along the path through the flowerbeds of the garden, armed only with a sword and without a shield, the troop of fully-armed guards stood at the gates of the palace, unconcerned, fearing nothing and [some] even sleeping.

[101] The evil Enibay [?], the treacherous Varazoy, disguised as a guard, took the royal mace, the steel sword, and the gold-bossed shield and slyly went on in front. This vicious traitor had secretly protected himself by wearing his armor underneath his robe. When they reached the middle of the garden and were close to the wall which surrounded the grounds of the royal park, the mighty Juanshir, being wise in all things, became aware of the treachery of the assassin, and alarmed by the clink of the armor worn by the other. The prince was heartbroken, imagining that it was everyone's intention to kill him. He silently made to return to the palace. But the impious murderer, who had been holding his sword loose in its scabbard, struck the brave prince a sudden blow from behind severely wounding him, since he was not wearing armor [g351]. But [Varazoy] was not able to quickly kill him with the sword. For [Juanshir], roaring like a lion, began to fight back with his own sword. But because the power of the Most High had abandoned him, [It] delivered him into the hands of the favorite he himself had reared.

When [Juanshir] approached him, the assassin held up his shield and stood his ground, and Juanshir plunged his sword into the solid shield. But then he could not withdraw it. The other, filled with bestial cruelty, furiously stabbed him again and again all over his body, spitefully, like a poisonous snake. Wounding him with merciless blows of sabre and dagger, he threw his lord to the ground. Now the murderer stealthily departed and went home, thinking that Juanshir was dead—even though he was but half dead—and cunningly arranging things not to arouse suspicion [by making it appear] that he had been asleep at home at the time, ignorant of what had happened. Meanwhile someone found out what had occurred and announced the bad tidings of the treason. A crowd gathered and grew. Then one of the criminal's brothers warned him of the enormity of his deeds, and he hastily mounted his horse and fled.

There was a certain patrician, the prince's sister's son [g352], who took a group of fifty men from his *Namesakan* legion and went after the murderer. But they knew that they would never catch the fugitive. So,

in revenge for what had happened, they went up into the hills of the district of Artsakhunik' where they pillaged and destroyed his father's house and burned it down. They looted the silk, taffeta, brocade, and linens of many colors, the gold and silver, and the fine furniture and utensils. Then they returned in tears, uttering cries of compassion and weeping and mourning for the prince. [Prince Juanshir] was still breathing and lived on for a few additional days. He made known the treasure and titles given to each of his sons, and confirmed them in their [patrimonial land] portions. And then, weakened by his terrible wounds, he died.

At that time there was no small amount of disturbance in our land of Aghuania, for the mob banded together and armed itself. The grandee lords and the whole country assembled and mourned the prince with much lamentation and plaintive and sorrowful voices. Thus unbearable grief and mourning visited the land. It happened that there was an orator by the name of Dawt'ak, a man skilled in the artist's craft, expert in creative composition, advanced [g353] in declamatory poetry, a man who spoke extremely well with rich and eloquent oratory and whose tongue was like the pen of an able writer. [Dawt'ak] had spent a long time at the royal court after his arrival there. When the bad tidings of the sudden murder of the great general spread throughout our eastern land, he began to sing this elegy in acrostic form about the worthy Juanshir [g354]:

---

[102]

### 35.

#### *Elegy on the death of the great prince Juanshir.*

Charles Dowsett's beautiful translation of the elegy is available [here](#). This corresponds to pages g354-g359 of the Shahnazarean *grabar* text. Each of the 36 verses of this acrostic begins with a letter in the order of the Armenian alphabet (from *ayb* [ւ] to *k'e* [ք]).

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book Two

---

[103]

#### 36.

***Varaz Trdat sits on Juanshir's throne as prince; the Huns seek vengeance for [Juanshir's] murder; and how [Varaz Trdat] made peace with them.***

When sorrow and grief had abated somewhat, and when the calamitous disaster had been somewhat forgotten [g359], the lords of the clans (*tear'k' tohmits'*), the governors (*kusakalk'*), administrators (*koghmnakalk'*), grandees (*metsametsk'*), lords (*naxarars*) and all the princes of this land assembled in the presence of the great archbishop Eghiazar and conferred about the peace and prosperity of the land of Aghuania. They occupied themselves with diligent thoughts about the governance of the land. They decided to elect a certain senior *naxarar* who had been honored with the imperial title of ex-consul (*apuhiwpat*) and had acquired the rank of patrician. His name was Varaz Trdat, son of Juanshir's brother Varaz P'eroz. Readily and with sincere willingness the princes of the land and the *kat'oghikos* greatly hurried to expedite this election. All the grandees, with their banners showing animal emblems hoisted, and to the sound of trumpets, placed him on the golden shield and raised him up three times, shouting words of praise.

And thus with great rejoicing was the dignity of the supreme power of his patrimonial throne bestowed upon him [ca. A. D. 681], and they brought gifts and offerings in honor of his new reign. Before this the brave Varaz Trdat in his great wisdom [g360] and understanding had displayed to everyone his loving kindness and goodwill. When he came to sit on the throne of the prince, some of his jealous clansmen behaved coldly towards him, but he soothed them with wise and friendly words and won the hearts of all. In accordance with his customary authority and using patience and kindness, [Varaz Trdat] induced the land to obey him. Immediately after this he hurried to the renowned capital city of Partaw and assumed control of it.

At that time Alp' Ilit'uer, the general and great prince of the Huns, assembled a multitude of his troops and those who came to join him from many places, the barbarous peoples of the land of Gog. They were all armed and equipped, with military chiefs with their banners and troops bearing halberds, and archers, and well-armed, armored and helmeted cavalry. And then [Alp' Ilit'uer] invaded Aghuania as if to avenge Juanshir's blood. He began raiding close to the foot of the great Mount Caucasus and spread through the villages of the *awan* of Kapaghak. He himself, with his auxiliary brigade, poured through the valleys into the plains, passing along the Kur River into the district of Uti. There he captured an enormous number of people and animals of that land taking everything as booty and enslaving everyone. Then they turned from there and encamped [g361] in the plains area near the border of the Lp'ink'.

Now when Varaz Trdat, prince of the Aghuans, saw the great multitude of the army and the way it had invaded and taken many prisoners and devastated everything, he was greatly troubled and concerned. He sent

the great chief bishop Eghiazar as an envoy to the prince of the Huns, expressing through him his sincere faithfulness and the friendship he truly felt for him as for a beloved brother. "We had no part in the murder of Juanshir", he told him. "This abominable and wicked crime was committed by a base and infamous man." The *kat'oghikos* of Aghuania narrated all this to the chief of the Huns. He also said other godly and prudent words, through which he brought [Alp' Ilit'uer] to fear and love God and inclined his mind to peace and unbreakable friendship. [Eghiazar] persuaded the prince of the Huns to help and support his prince. Then [Alp' Ilit'uer] returned to his own land [g362].

---

[104]

### 37.

***Concerning the reign of Varaz Trdat, how he received station and honor from many places; the death of Dawit', bishop of Mets Kuenits', and his replacement by Israye'l, who was a good leader.***

After this the godly prince Varaz Trdat's authority grew stronger day by day. He received the supreme dignity (*gah*, "throne/position") from the mighty royal prince of the Tachiks [Arabs], that is, the position of border-lord (*sahmanakal*) of the Eastern regions and ruler of the entire kingdom of Aghuania and the district of Uti. He had subjected all to his authority and ruled happily, securely and triumphantly over his territories. At that time Dawit', the blessed patriarch of Mets Kueanits' was gathered to his fathers. In this world, after fighting for what was good, he was called "the Good", and then he took his place among the hosts of fiery angels. Since his flock remained without a shepherd, the Church was left in sorrow. Then the pious prince of Aghuania, with his brother general [g363] and the *kat'oghikos* and all the bishops and lords, hurried to carry out God's will. He said, "Come, let us establish this virtuous man Israye'l, the chosen of God, as overseer of the holy diocese of the district of Mets Koghmanits', that he may illuminate them with wise legislation following the Creator's commandments." Now it happened that for a while [Israye'l demurred and] would not accept this appointment. But since it was at the command of the prince, they pressured him. [Israye'l] did not persist in his refusal, since he recalled the words of the Apostle: "If any one aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task" [1 Tim. 3. 1]. He also remembered that which had happened long since—the vision which had been revealed to him in the holy church of the city of Vagharhsapat.

[And so, finally, Israye'l] raised up his voice and said "May God's will be done." The prince sent senior lords to him as quickly as possible. They arrived in the district of Mijartsakh and found him in his retreat at Glxoy Vank'. A meeting of the diocesan priests was held there. Accompanying [Israye'l] they went to the *kat'oghikos* and to the prince of the Aghuans bearing edicts, and they presented Israye'l to them, [Israye'l, this man] nursed in holiness, dressed in his monk's habit [g364]. All of them took the letter of praise, including the general and the lords, and they affixed their seals to a deed on behalf of all districts. The *kat'oghikos* consecrated him bishop of the district of Mets Koghmanits', and sent him back to his own district accompanied by a large crowd and the necessary documents. They came to the old episcopal palace named Taghdzank. [Israye'l] was greatly honored by his co-adjutors and the chiefs and the people, and he excelled all of them doctrinally. He prayed to God for his land, cross in hand and arms outstretched. With priestly deportment he made great progress, and travelled through all the districts in his diocese. He fortified them by the grace of his teaching in accordance with the true orthodox faith, and thus he demonstrated his learning and shone with the love of Christ [g365].

---

[105]

### 38.

***Israye'l is sent by the great prince Varaz Trdat to Sahak, the great patriarch of Armenia, in the district of Ayrarat and to the pious prince as an expression of friendship.***

In these same days the pious prince Varaz Trdat thought to do an act of piety and he sent Bishop Israye'l as a token of his friendship to the great *kat'oghikos* of Armenia [Sahak III Jorop'orts'i, 677-703] and to the pious prince of the district of Ayrarat [Grigor Mamikonean, 662-684/5]. With great love they revered him, coming out to meet him. They found him a place to stay, and permitted him to remain for some time in the universal land. Now it happened then that the prince and the great general of Armenia had just brought from T'ordan in the district of Daranaghik' the precious relics of the martyr in Christ, the great Gregory, with all his bones to the city of Vagharshapat in the district of Ayrarat in the land of Armenia. They laid him to rest in the newly constructed vaults of the church built by the great Nerse's in the name of Saint Gregory. Bishop Israye'l prostrated himself before the *kat'oghikos* and the general of the Armenians begging and pleading with them to fulfill the desires of his heart and to grant his request if it were possible. He said: "Give me some of Saint Gregory's remains." But they did not agree to this [g366], arguing that "no one has ever distributed Saint Gregory's relics before, nor does anyone have the authority to take some of them and give them to you."

Then [Bishop Israye'l] sought the aid of Lady Heghine', first lady (*tikin*, or "queen") of Greater Armenia, who was also from the state of Aghuania. She helped him in this matter. She went with her retinue to the *kat'oghikos* and beseeched him to grant this request for the relics. She also persuaded her lord, the general of Armenia, to bestow the relics, saying: "Give my land and the House of my father a share of the relics of the great Gregory. Accede to the request of the bishop sent from my land that his wishes may be fulfilled and that he depart from us with a joyful mind." And humane God influenced him, and he agreed to give part of the jawbone of the great martyr and law-giver Gregory. Thus he presented the bishop with this desirable treasure. [Israye'l] then left the court, honored with great ceremony, and trusting in the grace of God, set off for home. After a few days' journey they arrived in their own land safely, in luminous glory, and exultant spirituality. [Israye'l] took the relics and laid them to rest in his monastery of Glxoy Vank' [g367].

---

[106]

**39.**

***Prince Varaz Trdat confers with his lords about sending Bishop Israye'l to the country of the Huns regarding conciliation.***

In the 62nd year of the Southern kingdom of the imperious Muhammad, Varaz Trdat, prince of Aghuania, conferred with the lords of his people and the *kat'oghikos* Eghiazar, and said: "The tax which the cruel people of Arabia (Tachkastan) have imposed on us is disastrous, while the yearly invasions of our country by the forces of the Huns are also unbelievable calamities for us. Our land is looted and weakened from both sides by attacks of these enemies. Come, you who are near and dear to me, let us choose a bishop from among those of our land to make peace for us, so that he may go and by the grace of God incline the minds of both lands to peace and unbreakable friendship. In that way we shall no longer harbor hatred and enmity for them in our minds.

After the princes and the lords had thought this matter over, they immediately decided to send a summons with many entreaties to the bishop of Mets Koghstants', Israyel [g368]. This man was truly admired by everyone because he glowed with modest virtue and spiritual wisdom and was always improving his soul with humility. He obeyed the commandment to love [his neighbor] and immediately undertook to travel to the distant land of the Huns. Presents and gifts and rations for the long journey were prepared for him and those with him. They departed on the eighteenth day of the month of Mehekan [December 23, 681]. They were peacefully escorted out of the city of Peroz Kawat, and then crossed the Kur River. They crossed the

Aghuanian border and arrived at the city of the Lp'ink after twelve days. All the residents of this city came out to meet [Israye'l] and joyfully received him in a manner befitting a bishop, especially since the divine Feast of Epiphany was approaching. Entering the city they lodged there for three days and then celebrated the Feast [of Christmas, January 6, 682]. Then they departed again, crossing through the lands of the Chighbk' at the foot of the great mountain.

Then the winter winds of the North raised terrible snowstorms near the summit of Mount Caucasus, and they held back for three days since they could not look up or find their way [g369]. They were completely exhausted and filled with fear by the satanic battle [against the elements], and kept awake by terror and the noise. Yet [Israye'l], the man of God, was not frightened. He took his Cross in his hand and commanded everyone to fall on their knees [and pray]. After that they ascended the mountain called Varde'druak. Through the power of the Holy Cross and the prayers of the great bishop the winds died down and their fury abated. And so they fearlessly crossed the huge and gigantic summit. After this neither sun nor stars was seen for many days and the bitter weather continued. Reluctantly they continued their journey until, forlorn and exhausted, they arrived after many days at the site of the ancient royal residence where Saint Grigoris, the grandson of the great Gregory and the *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans, was martyred. After some days they reached the gate of Ch'oray which is near Darband.

[107] There they received aid and great respect from the citizens. Then, loaded with honors, they resumed their journey and came to the splendid city of Varach'an at the beginning of the forty-day fast [of Lent]. Now when the great prince of the Huns heard about [Israye'l's] arrival he went out to greet him [g370]. He received him with great gladness and humbled himself before him, honoring him and paying great respect to his patriarchal holiness. The days of Lent dawned in glory and holiness as the citizens received him with great friendship. They were made happy and were honored by everyone, especially by the solicitous prince and the grandee nobility. When the bishop observed this glorious reception and the kiss of blessed peace he was overjoyed and gave thanks for the ineffable gifts of Christ. He rested here for many days after his fatiguing labors [during which time] he heard about and observed the imprudent and self-indulgent religion of this wretched people. He was saddened by and lamented the great wickedness and dubious faith of these folk who styled themselves pious worshippers of God. For they had apostasized His power and found another one.

---

#### 40.

***Bishop Israye'l confirms the land of the Huns (Honastank') in the faith, due to his teachings and they listen to him sweetly because of the miracles he worked.***

These people were practising [a religion including] tree-worship [g371], deluded into this fanaticism by satan. In accordance with their dull[cold]-witted Northern understanding, they thought that this filthy pagan practise—this delusional, fictitious, and false faith—was a great religion. If a person or an object happened to be hit by the thundering fiery lightning and heavenly fire, then they considered that person or thing a kind of sacrifice dedicated to the god K'uar. They also worship a gigantic wild monster whom they call T'angri Xan God, and whom the Persians call Aspandiat. [They worship him] using horses as a burnt offering. Since they have completely undisciplined minds, they practise every kind of error: beating drums, whistling over corpses, bloodying [themselves] by cutting their cheeks and limbs with swords and daggers, and holding naked swordfights. It was a diabolical sight, [to see] there at the graves man against man and detachment against detachment prepared for battle, naked. Many groups wrestled with each other and engaged in horse races riding this way and that in the orgy. Some spent their time weeping and moaning, while others played demonic games. They played their games and danced their dances with lewd acts, mired in benighted filth and deprived of the sight of the light of the Creator [g372]. They made sacrifice to fire and water, to some gods of the road, to the moon and to all the created things which they considered somehow wondrous.



Moreover, they were sexually incontinent and in accordance with their savage pagan customs, they married their father's wife, shared one wife between two brothers, and had several women. They had numerous irreligious laws and impious rites, as a consequence of which they were unable to comprehend or grasp the [doctrine of the] Sun of Righteousness.

[108] When [Bishop Israye'l] heard about and saw this obsession with evil and idolatrous customs, he begged God night and day for the salvation of the land, praying that he might find some means of converting them. At his command an hour was set aside for God, and all the lords and common folk of the land of the Huns came to worship the religion of the Holy Church and to hear the divine message. The prince and whoever else in the camp wanted to hear the words of the bishop assembled in the house of the Lord. And they said to each other: "Come, let us hear his words of comfort, for he is a chief in the holy Christian religion, which transmits to the world the message of the Holy Spirit."

When [Israel'l] saw their enthusiasm and the attention they were paying, he began to speak to them about the teachings found in the Holy Bible. And he said [g374]: [We omit the translation of Israye'l sermon (g374-g380). Charles Dowsett's excellent translation of this passage is available [here](#).]

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book Two

---

[109]

41.

*The Huns believe in Christ through the efforts of Bishop Israyel; the sacrificial altars are destroyed and the Cross of Christ is erected.*

Greatly enthused by listening to the words of the man of God, the benevolent and exalted prince Alp' Ilit'uer with all his grandees and his army listened to [Israyel's] preaching which was so adorned with flowers and they heard his sweet-tongued counsel with pleasure. Then they glorified God, saying: "Now we truly believe that the Lord has through this man sent us the comfort of His grace, in order that [Bishop Israye'l] may deliver us from black deeds and all [our] other satanic acts."

Thereafter they submitted to the yoke of service to Christ, observing Lent in purity and modesty, fasting and praying night and day with spiritual zeal. Each man vied with his neighbor in the worship of the Holy Church and forgot his previous gluttonous error. Thus the mind was purged of these things through the enlightening counsel of the blessed bishop [g380]. Quickly submitting to the command of the blessed bishop, the God-loving prince, together with those closest to him, undertook to observe annually the seven weeks of fasting. For [Prince Alp' Ilit'uer] was a very sincere man. Meanwhile, now that he himself had accepted God's commandment, he became pious and began to persecute the sons of darkness.

[Prince Alp' Ilit'uer] thus believed in His radiant doctrine and day by day became more glorious for love of Christ. He became a dwelling place for the coveted holy faith. This son of earthly parentage became a son of the grace of God and a kinsman of the life-giving Life. He was mighty and determined, valiant and renowned in battle and—like the Greeks at Olympus—appeared strong to all men. Moreover he won a reputation for outstanding bravery by performing many feats of valor in Turkestan with the Khazar Qaqan (*ar' Xazr xak'anin*). As a consequence of this, [the Qaqan], motivated by his affection, gave his daughter in marriage to him. He also received the rank of *il-ituer*. [Prince Alp' Ilit'uer] became renowned in three lands for accepting like a crown of glory the counsel and radiant teaching of the bishop. Gradually he began to obstruct the [practise of] excessive mourning for the dead [g381] and the diabolical sword fights. For he now regarded the religion of his fathers as abominable and unclean. [He began] to destroy the altars of Aspandiat and to prevent [folk from] making sacrifices to other false gods in favor of the worship of the living God, the creator of heaven and earth, the only-begotten Son, and the coequal Spirit. He rejected all other evil things from his thoughts, and like a newborn babe sought ceaselessly for pure milk. He constructed churches in various places and exalted the dignity of the priests of God. Now it happened that [the pagan Huns] worshipped tall leafy oak trees. These were dedicated to the loathsome Aspandiat. Horses were sacrificed to them and their blood was poured over the tree[s trunks] while the heads and skins were thrown over the branches. The bishop ordered that one of these trees—the principal one, the mother, and the tallest of them—be cut down.

[This tree] had been dedicated in the name of their false gods, but many in the land of the Huns revered it, as did the prince and all the nobles since they regarded it as the divine savior and life-giver and bestower of all good things. Now when they heard that he had ordered the huge tree dedicated to the giant to be cut down, [a proposal] which greatly upset them and threatened to destroy them, they raised a clamor. The witches (*kaxardk'*), sorcerers (*k'awdeayk'*), wizards (*vhukk'*) pagan priests (*k'rmapetk'*) [g382], and the common folk tore their garments and loudly shouted their protest to the prince of the Huns and to the grandees of the land. They cried: "How could you knowingly support and consider doing what our opponent and the enemy of our gods tells you to do, that is, to cut down that tree? Why did you ever listen to him and agree to demolish, wreck and ruin the altars of our temples which your fathers, kings and princes, built? To the present our entire land has worshipped them and received good gifts from the gods of these temples and from the sacred trees, [including] the increase of our people and power and victory in battles against your enemies. And now that you have such great regard for him, will you listen to what he says and give him the authority to remove and ruin and demolish the temples of your gods? Indeed, did you not receive good things and whatever else you asked for when you worshipped and offered sacrifices and gifts to the tree in the name of the brave giant Aspandiat? He made the sick well, he enriched the poor and needy. Furthermore it was through his power that we brought you rain during periods of scorching droughts and burning heatwaves, rain which cooled the great heat, made the plants and shrubs green, and ripened the fruit for your happy nourishment. And for you we appeased the thunderous roar of ethereal lightning from the clouds, and the heavy rains [g383].

[110] Will you now believe [Israye'l's] mistaken words, and worship the god he is preaching to you about? You must not forsake and abandon your native gods which you and your ancestors worshipped and be betrayed into the hands of someone who will throw you down and grind you underfoot. Worship [our native gods] so that they do not become enraged and punish our land with great and wicked blows. Whoever would dare to approach the place where temples to the giant Aspandiat and altars were built and established or [touch] that beautifully flourishing tree which is the guardian and savior of this land? Is it not true that [even] folk who unknowingly take fallen leaves or wood from that tree for whatever purpose are punished with horrible lesions, insanity, death and the house and line [of such transgressors] is destroyed? And now, can he approach it, touch it, cut it down and destroy the temples of our gods? We know that if he stubbornly insists on it and approaches them, he will suffer grievous ailments and even death" [g384].

Then the prince of the Huns responded to the sorcerers, witches, wizards, to the servitors of the altars and the trees, saying: "We have become convinced and believe this man and [now] worship and serve the God he has preached about to us. We shall not stop him from ruining and demolishing the temples, nor from uprooting and cutting down the tree and burning it in the fire. If you can terrify him through your altars, temples, and sacred trees or plunge him into the agonies of dire disease or cause his death, we shall believe in you. Moreover, we shall resume the building and worship of temples, altars, and graven images. We shall revere the trees and offer them sacrifices and gifts as we did up till now. However, if you cannot resist or frighten him and he destroys and demolishes the altars and temples and cuts down this tree and burns it, and he neither sickens nor dies, then, similarly, we shall be convinced that he was sent to us by God, and we shall worship the one God who created heaven and earth and the sun and the moon and the stars. Then I shall bind you hand and foot and turn you over to him, so that he may burn you in the fire with the trees and temples" [g385].

Then the sorcerers, witches, and wizards using their fanatical aphrodisiacal witchcraft started to perform incantations/magic (*diwt'ut'iwn*), false geomancy (*getnkoch'ut'eamb*), and to utter spells and chants (*ut'ut's ew barbajmuns imn yo'rine'in*). But they were unable to achieve anything with their false and mistaken arts. For it had happened previously that sometimes they were able to bind people with invisible bonds, cause grave sufferings, or direct spirits against them. Then [the priests] would make deceitful statements to them, saying: "You must offer sacrifices and gifts to the temples and the trees. What has befallen you is punishment from our great gods for not doing these things. But if you now offer the sacrifices and gifts before the trees and the temples, you will be delivered from your sufferings and afflictions." Because of the awe inspired [by the

priests], [the afflicted] would do as they said and do satan's will. Furthermore, sometimes [the priests] would make heavy rains appear, both visibly and in visions, and then dry the ground up again through their diabolical and satanic practises. In such ways did they harm and destroy their land, for they themselves erred and they caused the dim-witted to err as well.

But now they were unable to effect any of these things, nor did they manage to frighten [g386] or defeat that man of God [Bishop Israye'l], because the Holy Cross blocked and checked all their powers.

[111] The bishop, the legislator of the Holy [Spirit], then began to speak to the prince of the Huns and to the grandees, saying: "I am not at all frightened or terrified by their vain words. Those who aim to cow me with their diabolical witchcraft as they have scared other dull-witted folk are without any hope of the true life of God. I do not fear the tall trees or the altars arrayed before me in their diverse types. I shall act openly in the presence of you all, trusting fearlessly in the grace of the Holy Cross of Christ. I shall dispel the erroneous ideas and tree-worshipping which you hold in your hearts. [I shall correct your] error concerning things which are nothing in themselves and can do neither good nor evil, and cannot resist their enemies. Now watch with your own eyes how at my hands these dumb idols will fall and be cast down, pulverized in my hands, and trampled on in the roads of the land."

Then the bishop ordered the priests to take axes in their hands and to kneel and pray, calling on God with this psalm: "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let them that hate Him flee before him!" [Ps. 67. 2 = A.V. 68. 1] [g387]. And then [the bishop] made the sign of the Cross over the same lofty tree which had been dedicated in the name of the loathesome Aspandiat. All the priests then entered [the area] and cut the tree down. [Bishop Israye'l] immediately ordered that it be taken to the city of Varach'an. He summoned skilled woodworkers in the city and ordered them to make it into a beautifully balanced well-finished cross with painted ornaments. He made different kinds of images and glued them to it, covering it with accurately painted pictures, adorning it from top to bottom with similar beautiful things. He also fastened shining crosses to it, beautifully arranging them in a row from one end to the other along the right side with strong nails. At the base [of the former tree] [Israye'l] made a small square door which could be opened from both sides. On this [door] a lily was carved, while inside it was a silver cross containing a fragment of the Lord's Cross.

After so arranging and decorating [the tree] with various marvellous ornaments, [Israye'l] erected it as a place of pilgrimage and prayers in the royal court facing the east. Then he said: "Worship the Lord your creator in front of this symbol which brings salvation to all. In this way, those of you who were accustomed to worship that tree of yours in the error of your minds, might still worship this cross in accordance with your habit and custom [g388] and the invisible image of the Divinity. Since you eat and drink the flesh and blood of your sacrificial animals which you offer to the demons in front of the tree, He has erected His Cross in place of the sacred trees in this land. In place of the blood of the sacrifices He has given His blood for the redemption of us all. I realize that what you did [before] was done out of ignorance. From now on, however, come before the throne of the grace of God, cast out all the diseased sins of your impiety, and become worthy of clothing yourselves in the robes of the light of glory."

[112] Now when the pious prince of the Huns and his grandees heard this, they were inflamed with the love and fear of God. [Prince Alp' Ilit'uer] observed that not a single one of the evils which the sorcerers claimed the trees of the temples would use to punish the bishop—making him fall down in grievous sufferings and bringing him to death's door—was visited upon him. Quite the contrary, he became more glorious than ever, rejoicing and growing stronger in the service of Christ. Thus they were even further strengthened in the faith and listened to his preaching. Then, in his stern authority, [the prince] gave an order to arrest and bind hand and foot the diabolically deluded, demoniacal band of witches [g389], sorcerers, wizards and the principal chief priests. He had them brought before the man of God and delivered into his hands. He ordered that some of them should be thrown into the fire at the crossroads on the highways so that [people] might see what the fake power of the witches amounted to, and he had others thrown into jail in order to rid the land of vain religious cults and to place [the people] more easily under the yoke of service to Christ. He ordered that the

pagan golden images which some of them had fastened on themselves be taken away. In the presence of everyone [Bishop Israye'l], with his own hands, crushed them into the shape of the Lord's Cross. In this manner he showed his piety to all.

All these arrangements were made during the holy forty days of Lent in the many royal camps in the land of the Huns (*Honastan*). They were carried out by the will of the Lord God through the bishop with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by which the grace of the gifts of the ineffable glories of Christ were disseminated. Now many of the chief pagan priests and principal witchcraft-loving sorcerers were still in painful fetters when the sun-like radiance of Holy Easter dawned. However, with the consent of Prince Ilit'uer [g390] all the citizens were assembled and he ordered that a tribunal be held in public. Each side was disputing before the crowded assembly. Then the bishop, with holy scriptures in hand, began to preach. He sternly refuted them and put them to shame. These wretched priests of this false religion were disgraced by the Lord's Cross which the bishop always held in his hand. They were discouraged and disheartened, and even accused themselves. They confessed their sins and were converted to the true faith. They gave their destructive lots (or, dice) of divination (*hmayits'*) into the hands of the bishop who burned them. Then they themselves became worthy of rebirth through the holy [baptimal] font.

Seeing this, the prince of the Huns together with the entire multitude was still more strengthened in the love of the Christian faith. [At the same time he became further] estranged from the vain diabolical worship of abominations. Indeed, the prince and all the grandees offered sacrifices on the day of the consecration of the newly decorated image of the Cross which the bishop had erected in the royal court. Now when the priests wanted to sing blessings over the gifts before the Cross, the bishop said to the prince: "Behold [g391] the promise of your love for God. Today repay the Lord in order to reconcile yourselves with Him, that hereafter by eliminating impiety from your midst He might no longer hinder and obstruct you. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit tests you pagan priests in this way so that you also may become perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Now, agree to this: let the graves of the thunder-*ch'op'ayk'* [which are called] *Dark'unand* [or, let the royal graves of the thunder-*ch'op'ayk'*] be burned on this great day by those chief priests who profess that faith. Let them curse them with curses and burn them. Then let them be baptized and eat food."

When the pious prince of the Huns heard this, he quickly gave him permission to demolish the temples. Then the bishop and the prince sent Movse's, a man skilled in the arts, and other priests to demolish and burn the temples, with the collaboration of the ranks of the pagan chief priests. And together they burned down the abominable temples of their heroes (*zmeheansn...zdiwts'azneay*). The bishop himself went up onto an elevated place across from the idols. When he kneeled down there and made the sign of the Cross, a ferocious wind blew, further stoking the flames on the lofty temples and the loathsome *ch'op'ayk'* with its skins and sacrifices. Then, in great joy, they returned to the city [g392] and became clothed in light by baptism. And on that day the prince and the grandees held the assembly of assemblies, and the feast of feasts.

---

[113]

## 42.

***The discussion held by the great prince of the Huns Ilit'uer with his lords about getting Bishop Israye'l to remain among them and to establish a patriarchal see there.***

The great prince of the Huns entered into a good discussion with all the grandees and lords of his realm. He said:

"Formerly we were mired in ignorant darkness, the obscurer of the soul, and we were unable to see the light of righteousness of the whole world. Now our Lord Jesus Christ in His sweetness has sent us this bishop to lead us to Life. With both word and deed he has reprimanded and punished

our impiety, and has led us to know God the creator of all things and His wondrous power. My mind fully and truly believes and bears witness [to this power]. Lo, we have come to believe in one God, creator of heaven and earth. Let us take as our example all the lands accepting this faith, and the great kingdom of the Romans [g393]. They say that there was once a king Constantine who built Constantinople and that he was the first Christian of that kingdom and such a faithful man that the angel of God waited on him. [They say] that with this faith he destroyed all his enemies in a mighty triumph. If one may be so glorious and triumphant through belief in Christianity, why should we hesitate to believe in the living God? Behold, here is this man, the bishop Israye'l, a teacher of God's commandments. Let us go to him and beg him to stay in our land and enlighten us."

As they were united on this, the prince sent to the bishop Israye'l a certain senior prince named Awch'i [Tk. "hunter"], who held the rank of *tarxan*, and his chamberlain (Arm. *senekapet*) Ch'at'kasar. They came to him and informed him of the decision of the conference, namely, that the great prince of the Huns and all the grandees had said: "Father, it is through you that we have come to know the Lord our creator, and we shall always believe in and worship the Holy Trinity. We beg Your Holiness to agree to be our overseer and *vardapet* and to establish a patriarchal see in our city of Varach'an. In the name of the Lord, I, Ilit'uer, will enter into an agreement with you that I shall completely eliminate from the country of the Huns all pagan cults [g394] and shall burn in the fire those witchcraft-loving sorcerers who will not be brought to the faith. I shall put to the sword those who go about as pagans in my land or who secretly sacrifice to the idols. May piety prosper and the ineffable gifts of Christ be proclaimed."

The bishop replied, saying: "I do not have the authority to do that without [the permission of] the great patriarch of the Aghuans, the blessed Eghiazar. In this matter, he has the authority. Furthermore, I already have a well regulated diocese. How could I abandon my flock when it was God Who gave it to me to shepherd. But may Christ the Lord in His humanity take care of you, prosper you, and bless you, and give you because of your faith a shepherd to watch over you with the Gospel of Christ." The messengers came back a second and a third time always saying the same thing. The bishop responded: "For now, with God's grace, give me leave to return to my own land to my pious son Varaz Trdat, prince of Aghuania, and to the blessed *kat'oghikos*. Should it be agreeable to God and to them, God will bring it about. The honor which you promise me [by remaining here now] means nothing to me. Should I meet a painful death from being tortured by you, however, I shall consider this a glory and honor for myself and shall rejoice in the Lord [g395]. Now you must inform the whole land of Aghuania of your decision in writing, and also the patriarch Eghiazar. For from the time of Saint Eghishe' until now [the *kat'oghikos*] alone has been granted the Apostolic see of the Northeast by the city of Jerusalem where God dwelt and which was consecrated by Saint James, the brother of the Lord. You are located at the edge of that diocese. How can I comply with your wishes when I lack the consent of all the fathers and brothers and my fellow bishops? The question [you raise] is a new one, and consultation is important." When they heard all this from the bishop, they gave the command and sent him back to his own land with honor.

---

[114]

### 43.

***The return from the Huns of Israye'l, bishop of Mets Koghmank', accompanied by two [Hun] chiefs requesting that he be made their leader.***

Ilit'uer, the great prince of the Huns, chose from the chiefs of his land Ch'it'gin Xursunats' and Ch'at'n Xazr to accompany the blessed Israye'l as ambassadors of goodwill, and to request that he be [designated as] their leader. Here is a copy of their letter:

"We have seen and received Bishop Israye'l, the man of God sent by you [g396], and through him we greet you, the blessed Lord Eghiazar, great patriarch of Aghuania, and our beloved brother Varaz Trdat, presiding prince of Aghuania (*ashxarhakat ishxan Aghuanits'*). You requested *physical* peace from us, and we saw him come with his spiritual greeting like an image of God. Through his saintly conduct and the wonderful miracles revealed by the Most High, we recognized our creator and acquired *spiritual* peace. Now we ask you to grant us this very Bishop Israye'l—through whom many of us have found eternal salvation—to serve as our overseer and leader, so that unbreakable friendship may be established between us. Be well in the Lord."

---

#### 44.

##### ***The letter of the prince of the Huns to the land of the Armenians, written with the same intention.***

"To Sahak, the great chief bishop of Greater Armenia, and to the praiseworthy Prince Grigor, general of the Armenians: greetings.

Our fathers have been asleep from the beginning of time, benighted by ignorance, darkness and fog. But Salvation came to the world. God the Most High came to earth as Christ [g397]. We [Northerners] heard this with our own ears, but just faintly. It was during our raids into your land and into the House of the Aghuans, which is near[er] to us—for you and the entire world have one faith—that a virtuous spirit of emulation planted itself in our hearts as well. Thus the Word of Christ our God was fulfilled, and at the northernmost end of the world His Gospel was preached. We learned all of its contents from one excellent man Israye'l, bishop of Mets Koghmank'.

By now you have heard from those who have come to you about the miracles that took place among us. Grant our request and have the kindness to send us this same man as our overseer. We have also requested him from the blessed patriarch of the Aghuans, Eghiazar, whom we know to be your colleague and co-religionist. We beg both of you to grant our spiritual request, so that through his presence among us and our sharing one faith raids by the troops of barbarian peoples may be averted from your land. Farewell."

When they came to Aghuania and Armenia and had greeted them, they informed them about all that God had done in the land of the Huns by means of Israye'l. They delivered the letters of the great prince of the Huns to the blessed Sahak and to Grigor, prince of the Armenians. They were received joyfully by [Sahak and Grigor and] the whole land. This is how [g398] they replied:

---

[115]

#### 45.

##### ***Response to the letter from the Huns.***

From Sahak, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians and all the clergy,  
From Grigor, prince of the Armenians, and the entire congregation of the laity,

Greetings in the Lord. It is with pure joy that we give thanks for the ungrudging gift of Christ, that the life-giving salvation of God was given to you as a gift. [All that has happened there] was

related to us. We have seen the letter which you, newly consecrated servants of God, have written to us. We have learned from it that the goodness of the Creator has caused the light of the knowledge of God to shine in your land as in all lands. We have further glorified God, who loves humanity, for not abandoning you to the vain forms of worship of your forefathers. Rather, He has made known to you His holy name, and you have become true worshippers of God your creator.

And now, lo, we have learned that His name has spread to the ends of the earth. For from your letter and from your envoys we have learned how you were converted whole-heartedly by the venerable Bishop Israye'l. It seems to us that although we and our land are physically distant from you, through the love in our hearts it is as though you were just across from us. As regards your request for Bishop Israye'l, your opinion that a flock without a shepherd is an impossibility is profound [g399]. Consequently, it is difficult and painful for us not to grant your request. But it happens that he is not appointed by our see, but by the House of the Aghuans. Our wish and inclination is that he should always stay among you, but an order to this effect comes [not from us but] from the authority of our patriarchal colleague Eghiazar, patriarch of Aghuania. It is for him to decide. Acknowledge the living God, who gives life to men, and causes them to die and live again. May the same grace of the Holy Spirit strengthen you in fear of the Lord and in keeping His commandments. We, following our heart's desire, shall never fail to remember you in our churches. Be well.

When Ch'ikt'gin Xursan and Ch'at'n Xazr returned from Armenia and stood before the *kat'oghikos* Eghiazar and the prince Varaz Trdat in the capital city of Partaw, they requested permission to have the bishop [for their leader]. But they did not want to give them Israye'l as their leader. They said: "He must not leave the flock entrusted to him by God in order to be with you, but we command him to come and go [between the two countries] [g400] as often as he is able, to confirm you in the faith of Christ and to preserve the unbreakable friendship we have for each other. Now we are allies. Let him be an intermediary between you and us to dispel any enmity [that might arise] and to cultivate friendship and peace."

When the princes heard all this, they were alarmed and troubled by these decisions. But they unwillingly assented, saying: "Let him not delay in travelling back and forth to us lest the foundation of the faith he established be destroyed and we be orphaned. For we will not accept any other *vardapet* nor submit to anyone else.

And the venerable bishop, in accordance with his gentle disposition, made both sides flourish. He willingly undertook to journey to the Huns, to tend the newly converted flock of Christ, and to abide firmly by the oath and the conditions of the treaty. Persuaded by the words of the gracious bishop, they were filled with joy and returned home in peace, glorifying the most-blessed Trinity [g401].

---

[116]

## 46.

[We omit the translation of chapters 46-49 (g401-g417) which deal with doctrinal matters. Charles Dowsett's excellent translation of these chapters is available [here](#).]



# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book Two

---

[117]

50.

***Concerning the hermit Yovse'p' who lived in Artsakh, went to Jerusalem, and returned bringing with him relics of the Saints.***

During the reign of Heraclius and the destruction of the Persian kingdom under Yazdgird, when Ezer was *kat'oghikos* of Armenia and Mushegh *sparapet*, when Grigor was lord of Siwnik', Mat'usagha, bishop, and Varaz Grigor, lord of Gardman, held authority in Aghuania, I, Yovse'p', a hermit, left the retreat at Brut in the district of Gegham. It had been burned down due to the terrible troubles of the period, for lawless men became infuriated and trampled the churches underfoot, demanded tribute from the oppressed, and laid waste the land in their destructive path. The bloodthirsty race of Tachiks in particular began to grow mighty and to wage war. And they turned all lands into mere earth to be trampled underfoot. I escaped from such tribulations by fleeing to the district of Artsakh to the village of Yzerk and to the elderly bishop Mihr. He received my unworthy self, asked the villagers for this site, and built [g417] this church, where I dwelled for twelve years. Then God gathered him to his fathers.

Andre'as succeeded to his throne and held authority for eleven years. I accepted him as my lord, and he fully confirmed me in my offices. However, there were no relics of Saints in this place. Now it happened that a certain hermit called Mxit'ar from Tandzik', wanting to see the holy city of Jerusalem, journeyed there with two companions and worshipped before all the holy things. After he had resided there for a year, Christ granted him some relics of Saint Stephen and Saint George through a pious Byzantine citizen who had preserved them for his kinsfolk. When they had died out, he gave the relics of the Saints to Mxit'ar, saying: "Take them back to our own land and put them in a place worthy of them." [Mxit'ar] quickly accepted the treasure and travelled via Byzantine territory for fear of enemies. He arrived at Mount Taurus at the martyrion of Saint Andrew who had been martyred there along with many companions by King Seleucus. There he made a great request and implored the guardian T'umas to give him some of the relics of Andrew. [T'umas] was persuaded by his entreaties and acceded to his request.

[118] Having received this valuable treasure, [Mxit'ar] came to the Artsakh area [g418]. It was then that I, Yovse'p', hearing this news, went out to meet them in a manner befitting the [dignity of] putting the Saints to rest. The next day I asked Mxit'ar where he wanted to take the Saints, and he replied: "They will dwell wherever God wills it." Overwhelmed by my love of the Saints I said to him: "I realize that I am unworthy to guard them, but with you, Mxit'ar, I am certain that we shall guard them all the days of our lives." [Mxit'ar] accepted this [offer] and laid the Saints to rest in the martyrion which P'ok'rik ("Small") the carpenter had constructed with the aid of his son Yohan and Baxdane'r the smith. For three years we performed commemorative services for them in accordance with the canons.

After this, the desire was planted in my heart to get some of the relics of Saint John who was great among those born of woman, as the Savior attested. With my students K'ristosatur, Grigor and Sargis, I went in search of [some of the] relics of John the Baptist (Karapet, "Precursor"). This was done by the command of Andre'as the priest, who also provisioned us, and with the consent of my [monastic] family, the monks Yovhan and Mxit'ar. I set out and arrived at the holy city of Jerusalem. After worshipping there I returned in great sorrow, for all of them there were tainted by their adherence to the world-destroying Council [of Chalcedon]. Paying respect to none of them, I returned to my village of Puhavank' in the district of Gelark'uni [g419]. Now I had known from my childhood that a piece of the relics of John were located there. With great entreaties I begged Grigorik, the guardian of [the relics of] the Saints [for some part of them]. By the mercy of God I convinced him, and he opened a chest in which we found [the relics of John] the blessed Baptist, the Apostle Thomas, and the proto-martyr Stephen. Our forefathers had brought them here from the [then] Orthodox [clerics] of the holy city of Jerusalem. I, Yovse'p', took them to the same martyrium. Filled with the greatest joy [the monks] came out to meet me. Thus we laid them to rest in this place and established commemorative services for them in accordance with the teachings of Cyril of Jerusalem, who prescribed readings for the glory of Christ our God.

After this, all the Saints located in the district of Gegham were well pleased. All [the relics of the other Saints] were brought to this same church. Each [reliquary] was marked with [the proper] name in writing. Through their intercession may the Lord God have mercy on this land.

---

[119]

## 51.

### ***The number and type of churches built in holy Jerusalem. You will find the truth here.***

The distance of the hollow rock grave of our life-giving Savior Christ from the center of the dome of the Holy Sepulcher is one and one half fathoms [g420]. Mounted on pillars on top of the church sits a dome 100 cubits high and 100 wide. There are twelve columns on both sides below and twelve columns in the upper story. In that upper story are located the spear, the sponge, and the cup of Christ, plated in gold. The principal church is that of the Discovery of the Cross. It is called the [Martyrs'] Chapel, and is 20 cubits distant from the Church of the Resurrection. It has 65 columns along its length, above and below. The blessed Church of Golgotha is ten paces from the Church of the Resurrection and is called Adam's Tomb. There is an altar on the rock above this, where Christ was crucified. The holy Church of Sion is one furlong distant from the Church of the Resurrection. It is 100 cubits long and 70 wide, with cloisters comprising eighty columns. It lacks an upper story, having only an attic made of wooden trellis-work, and it is in here that hangs the crown of thorns which they placed on the head of the Giver of Life. To the right of the church there is the upper story of the sacrament and a wooden dome on which is painted the Last Supper of our Savior and in which there is an altar. Mass is celebrated in the upper story of the Church of Sion, and there is one upper story (?).

The house of Pilate, called Gabbatha, is located to the right of the Church of Holy Sion. The stone our Savior stood on before Pilate and His footprints [on that stone] [g421] are visible to this day. Beneath it is the basin where He washed His disciples' feet. To the left of the Church of Sion stands the prison where Christ was imprisoned; and mass is offered on an altar in there. In the place outside the town—where the Jews seized the coffin of the blessed Virgin, to prevent her from being buried—is a dome mounted on four pillars, and the pillars are made of marble and are adorned with a bronze cross. From top to bottom there are 250 stone steps down to the holy Tomb of the Virgin, which is in the valley of Gethsemane. From there to the Mount of Olives, where Christ rose, there are 800 steps.

In the place of the Ascension there is a beautiful building with a dome in the shape of the Church of the Resurrection, 100 cubits long and 100 cubits wide. The Jordan River and Mount Hor and many districts are

visible from there. Bethlehem is 220 parasangs to the west of the Church of the Resurrection. The church is 200 cubits long and 100 wide, having ninety marble columns and stone arches. Inside this [church] is the double cave which Abraham bought as a tomb. Below the sanctuary are the holy grotto and the manger, where there is an altar on which mass is celebrated. On the right of the church there is a martyrium where the relics of the children killed by Herod are kept. East of this, on the banks of the Jordan [g422] 5 furlongs from Bethlehem, is a terrace where there are two churches in which mass is celebrated. Seven parasangs from Jerusalem towards the east, in the place where the Savior was baptized, there is a church built in the form of a cross with pointed roofs, 80 cubits long, 80 wide, with three altars on which mass is celebrated. The Mount of Olives is to the east of Jerusalem.

---

[120]

## 52.

***Concerning those monasteries built in the name of the Aghuans in Jerusalem, according to what we have learned from [the letter of] the venerable Anastasius to Vahram Mamikonean.***

Pandavank' [monastery], which is located on the east side of the Mount of Olives, was built first by a monk named Panon from Aghuania. It is held at the present time by an Aghuanian priest named Petros.

The Mruv monastery of the Forty Martyrs, close by in the same area is now held by the Arabs.

The monastery of Partaw, "The Holy Mother of God", near the Tower of David; half is held by a woman named Mariam from Shamk'or, and half by the Arabs.

The monastery of Kaghankaytuk' in the same area; at present half is held by a Christian named T'eodoros, an Arab, Abraham's deacon. [T'eodoros was the son] of Abughkami from [the town of] Zarishat in Aghiovit, [and half] is held by the unjust and wicked Arabs.

The monastery of Artsakh, "The Mother of God", which is located to the south of Saint Stephen's, now is completely held by the Arabs [g423].

The monastery of Amaras, "St. Gregory", half of which is held by a woman called Grigori, and half by the Arabs.

The names of three other Aghuanian monasteries forcibly taken by the Arabs are not known. There is another [Aghuanian] monastery with the monasteries of the Ar'aweank' in the middle of the marketplace which now is held by the Arabs. Because of the envy of the Jerusalem patriarchs, consecration of Armenians and Aghuans by the monasteries was forbidden, for there were more than a hundred of them. Armenian princes gave to Emperor Justinian 7 talents (*kendinar*), which is 70,000 *dahekans*, and so wrested the monasteries from the tyranny of the patriarchs. Afterwards, however, through our lack of care, all of them fell into ruin [g424].

## End of Book Two

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book Three

---

[Page 121]

#### 1.

***First, regarding the attack made [on us] by the people of Ishmael from the Southern country with the aim of ruling the entire world; and about the beginnings of the false prophet Muhammad.***

Let us narrate here what we have learned from our inspired teachers about what came to pass, bearing in mind the prophetic words spoken about Ishmael: "His hand shall be against everyone" [Gen. 16.12], and "He shall become a great nation" [Gen. 17.20].

At the time of the waning of the Sasanian Persian kingdom, a man arose named Muhammad who was one of the false prophets that the Savior taught us about. He had a diabolical spirit and was a ferocious archer living in the desert. One day Satan, taking the form of a wild ass, took him to meet a certain false Arian cenobite named Bahira. Then the evil one disappeared. The well-bent bow of Muhammad was aimed at [Bahira]. But the man screamed out: "Do not sin, my son, for I am a man just like you." Then Muhammad said to him: "If you are a man, why are you living in a cave?"

Then [Bahira] called [Muhammad] to him and started to teach him from the Old and New Testaments according to the interpretation of Arius, who considered the Son of God to be a created being. [Bahira] commanded him to relate to the barbarous Arabs (Tachiks) what he had learned from him, his loathesome teacher. He also demanded that no one should know his own whereabouts. That ignorant, pagan, self-indulgent people was astonished at such eloquent talk, and asked Muhammad: "How do you know such things?" Muhammad replied, deceiving his own ignorant folk: "An angel spoke [these things] to me as to one of the first prophets who spoke to God." [The Arabs] secretly designated spies to learn who had told him these things and how he knew all these things. Now when Muhammad found out about this, he secretly and treacherously had his evil teacher killed and then buried him in the sand. Then he sat on the very spot and told the spies: "Here is where the angel appeared to me and informed me about very great wonders." When they observed that he was alone, they went and related everything to the credulous and fanatical Arab people. They convened a great assembly, went into the waterless, devil-haunted desert, and with the greatest honor led that demon-inspired Muhammad into their midst.

Then was the word of the Savior fulfilled concerning the acceptance of a false prophet, for Muhammad, who was deluded by demons, began to prophesy. He said: "If you hear and heed my prophecies and sermons great power will come to our people. This is what it says in the Epistle to the Romans, 'our power has been given to us by God.'" The place where they had their fire-temples and places of sacrifice, [Muhammad] renamed the

Dome of Abraham and the place where God had walked. He ordered then and there that [the fire-temples and places of sacrifice] be destroyed. He called his army the army of Abraham. He ordered them to pray to a square altar, and he had a stone pillar erected to be kissed in the name of Abraham. The venerable prophet [Jeremiah] prophesied about such a one, that: "If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man's wife, will he return to her? Would not that woman be greatly polluted?" [Jeremiah 3.1] Muhammad himself did just such a thing.

[122] A certain Arab named Talb had a beautiful wife. [Muhammad] therefore sent him a message, saying: "God has commanded you to leave your wife." Talb took that wife of his and brought her to the market-place where he swore before witnesses and repudiated her and released her from him. Muhammad took the woman for himself, fulfilled his lecherous lust on her and then sent her back to Talb, saying: "God has ordered you to take her back again." And so he introduced this disgusting law among their people that if a man repudiates his wife and she goes and sleeps with someone else, he may take her back again." Such then is their legislation: they swear by the terrible name of God and then break their oath, yet they swear by the genitalia of women and keep the oath inviolable. He also taught other similarly disgusting things to that people. They are the precursors and troops of the Antichrist who will be his worshippers and comrades. The blessed Paul said about them: [they are] "men corrupt in mind and counterfeit in faith whose folly will be made plain to all on the Day of Judgement of God" [2 Tim. 3.8-9] and elsewhere, "weeping I tell you about the enemies of the Cross of Christ. Their end is destruction" [Phil. 3.18-19].

In the 65th year of the Armenian Era [616/617] the false prophet Muhammad appeared in the city of Medina. In the 70th year [621/622] he went to the Dome of Abraham. From there in the month of Safar he went to that city which today is called after his name Mahmetay. He remained there for one year, during the entire course of which he made raids from that city. Beginning in the month of Rabi' al-'Awwal (*r'abi ghovagh*) he delivered the Dome of Abraham. The 19th of Ramadan marked the eighth year of his rule. On the 15th day of the month of Shawwal he fought with the Persian Rep'. In the month of Dhu' l-Qa'da at the time when day turns to night he arrived at Mecca, and returned from there to his city where he remained for six days in the month of al-Qa'da in the same year. He left Sed, the son of Abu Sed in Mecca and his comrades returned to Mecca. Chief among his comrades was Abu Bak'r son of Abu Kuhabay. This was the ninth year of Muhammad's rule. In the tenth year he died, on Monday the second day of the month Rabi' al-'Awwal, after a rule of ten years. He preached and secretly strengthened his false faith during thirteen years. He was forty years old when he appeared, and sixty-three when he died.

---

[Page 123]

## 2.

### ***The caliphs who held power after Muhammad, the false prophet.***

The second ruler of the Tachiks after Muhammad was Abubk'r Abi Kahep'ean who ruled for 9 years.

Umar ibn Xatab, 7 years; he was killed.

Ut'man ibn Ap'an, 11 years. Then they restricted Ut'man's authority, and Ut'man gave authority to Abdlay and the privilege of dying his hair and beard with saffron.

Muawet, 9 years.

Ezid ibn Muawea, 8 years. In his days lived Hajij ibn Usup'.

Abdlme'lik' ibn Mruan, 11 years.

Vlit' son of Abdlme'lik', 9 years.

Sule'man ibn Abdlme'lik', 11 years.

Umar son of Abdlaziz, 10 years.

Ezid ibn Abdlme'lik', 6 years.

Heshm ibn Abdlme'lik', 20 years.

Vlit' ibn Ezid, one year. They killed him and there was confusion among the Arabs.

Mruan son of Muhammad, 4 years. He killed the chiefs of the Koraysh (*Kuriishk*), sixty men, the murderers of the amir Vlit', pointing out the murderers.

Abl Abas came from Media with the help and troops of Abu Mslim, prince of Khorasan, and killed Mruan, and then he himself reigned for 7 years.

And Abl Abas Abdlay son of Muhammad son of Agha son of Abdlay son of Abas son of Abdl Mutaghibay, whose tribe is now called the Heshamik's, secretly killed Abu Salim when he came to power. And after this murder, he himself died.

Abu Jap'r called Abdlay, his brother, ruled for 22 years; he died in the Dome of Abraham.

Madi called Muhammad, son of Abdlay, 9 years.

Muse', one year.

Harun son of Madi, called Madiun, 25 years. He brought immeasurable oppression on the land, and therefore many districts of Armenia went over to the Byzantines.

Mahmet son of Harun, 3 years. While he still lived, Harun divided the kingdom between his two sons Muhammad and Maymun. By seniority Muhammad was to rule over Baghdad and Khorasan, but Maymun fought him, and Muhammad died, and Abdlay, called also Maymun, ruled over all.

Ibrayim, 10 years.

Harun the Second was established as ruler by Muhammad Amir Mumin. [He ruled] in the 280th year of the Armenian Era (A.D. 831/832).

---

[124]

### 3.

#### ***Concerning a certain Nerse's Bakur, a Diophysite, who became kat'oghikos of Aghuania.***

When Eghiazar the venerable *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans died [A.D. 688], [there came forward] a certain Diophysite named Nerse's, a Chalcedonian sectarian and formerly bishop of Gardman. He made an oath with Spram, the first lady (*tikin*, "queen") of Aghuania and the wife of Varaz Trdat. She subscribed to that same heresy. [Nerse's] signed an agreement with her to further his ambition for power. [The agreement had this import]: "If it is your will then call me to the Aghuanian patriarchate [as *kat'oghikos*] and I shall convert all Aghuania to Chalcedonianism." This heretical woman listened to him and then consulted with the bishops and

grandeess of the land of Aghuania. Since no one realized the treachery, they unanimously agreed to fulfill her request. However, the almighty Holy Spirit influenced Yove'l, bishop of Mets Irank', and before the great assembly he requested that Nerse's sign a document anathematizing the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo and seal it with his ring. The eastern synod accepted this letter in accordance with canons, and Yove'l himself, together with the other bishops placed him on the blessed throne of the patriarchate of Aghuania. The same Yove'l then took the letter of anathema and put it in a safe place. [Yove'l] lived 14 years after this and then was translated to Christ.

It was at this time that Nerse's found the opportunity to accomplish his will. He quickly went to the district of Mets Irank', to his colleague the abbot Zak'aria. [Nerse's] informed him of his intention to make him a bishop if only he would return to him the signed document for burning. [Zak'aria] gave him the letter with his sacred oath. [Nerse's] burned it then and there and ordained Zak'aria bishop of Mets Irank'. Thus he had gained him as an important friend. Then [like a dog] he returned to his old vomit, [to the beliefs] which he had long entertained. Lady Spram promoted him with her assistance and that of other nobles who had accepted his tares. He demolished and ruined many church altars. He began persecuting the orthodox and worthy heirs and the clergy of the Church, beginning with the venerable Israye'l the miracle-working bishop of Mets Kueank'. [It was Israye'l] who had converted many of the lands of the Khazars and the Huns to Christianity. [Nerse's also persecuted] Eghiazar, bishop of Gardman. However, some of the bishops rejected him, among them: Yovhanne's, bishop of Kapagha, Sahak, bishop of Amaras, Sime'on, bishop of Hosh, and Sheroy, a great prince of the Aghuans together with his nobles. [These folk], together with a multitude of the clergy convened an assembly and anathematized Nerse's and all the heretics. And they wrote a letter to the Armenians describing these events.

---

[125]

#### 4.

##### ***Letter of homage from the united Aghuan synod to Eghia, kat'oghikos of the Armenians.***

"Our fathers shared one orthodox faith with your fathers for the salvation of their souls. Because of the indulgence of the Lord God, the world-destroying heresy of Chalcedon has grown strong and has spread through the world. But until now our areas have remained unadulterated by this heresy. Now, however, Nerse's, a man whom we thought was a good shepherd, has turned into a wolf and has begun to sow discord within the rational flock of Christ. Thus we have decided to advise Your Holiness that you might visit us as you visit your own members and heal our injuries. Be well in the Lord."

---

#### 5.

##### ***Letter from Eghia, kat'oghikos of the Armenians to Caliph 'Abd al-Malik, about the same matter.***

"To the world-conquering Caliph 'Abd al-Malik from Eghia, chief bishop of the Armenians:

By the power of Almighty God we hold our vassal land subject to your suzerainty. We and the Aghuans worship the divinity of Christ with the same [Monophysite] faith. But the man who is now *kat'oghikos* of Aghuania and is seated in Partaw has made an agreement with the emperor of Byzantium. He mentions him in his prayers and forces the land to come to doctrinal unity with him. Be advised of this and do not delay taking action for there is a wealthy (*metsatun*) [noble]

woman who is in league with him. On your great authority, order those who want to sin against God to be punished in accordance with their deeds."

---

6.

***Caliph 'Abd al-Malik's answering letter to Eghia, Armenia's kat'oghikos.***

"Eghia, man of God, *jat'lik* (*kat'oghikos*) of the Armenian people, I have read your friendly letter, and I have sent my faithful servant to you with many troops. As regards the rebellion of the Aghuans against our authority, we have ordered that they should be corrected in accordance with your religion. In your presence our servant will deliver our punishment at Partaw. Nerses and the woman who shares his sentiments will be thrown into iron chains and brought to the royal court in disgrace. This way I will make an example of them for all rebels to see."

---

[126]

7.

***The arrival of Armenia's kat'oghikos Eghia at Partaw; the punishment of Nerse's; and the enthronement in his stead of the head of the deacons, Sime'on, by the will of the Aghuanian synod.***

Eghia, the great patriarch of the Armenians, arose and went to Partaw, the great city of Aghuania. He sat down in the great church there and ordered that Nerse's be brought before him. But Nerse's was in hiding and could not be found. Then Sheroy, a very pious prince of Aghuania, seized those close to him and forced them to produce Nerse's. They put him in the midst of the crowded tribunal in front of Eghia. Because he did not respond [to the charges against him], in accordance with the royal command, they grievously wounded him. Then he was bound to the woman foot to foot prior to being exiled. As a result, he did not eat for eight days and died. He had himself buried in those very chains and cursed Sheroy for being the leader of the wickedness of himself and Spram because of a conflict over authority. Nerse's had occupied the [patriarchal] throne for 14 years as an orthodox priest, and for three and a half years wickedly [as a heretic]. He resembled the Antichrist who prepares to come in the last days.

When these matters had thus resolved themselves, Sime'on, a modest and holy man, was selected by the same assembly and ordained as patriarch of the Aghuans. Nerse's' heresy was removed from the land. [Sime'on] [re]established many orthodox customs in the damaged [Aghuanian] Church, placed all the heresy-ridden writings of Nerse's in boxes and threw them into the Trtu River by his summer residence called Berdakur. [Sime'on] occupied the [*kat'oghikos*] throne for one and a half years.

---

8-9.

[We omit the translation of chapters 8-9 which deal with doctrinal matters. Charles Dowsett's excellent translation of these chapters is available [here](#).]



***Document containing the names of the Aghuanian lords in order of their precedence which Caliph 'Abd al-Malik's eunuch took and deposited in the royal diwan.***

We affirm as valid this confession of faith in the Holy Spirit which we requested from the Council of Partaw in writing. [We requested it] to distinguish between the truth and the deceitful words of Diophysite heresies and the opponents of virtuous teachers. [The signatories are:]

First, I, Sheroy, prince of Aghuania, and Juank'oy, *sparapet* of Aghuania;

then the patrician Vardan and his brother Gagik and Vaxtang i [of the] Varazmanean. Their ancestor was Vardan K'aj of the Mihrakan family who in the days of Vach'agan, king of Aghuania, was designated president of the Council of Aghue'n by the king and settled in Gardman;

Patrik i K'aroyean, descended from the line of kings who were settled in the district of Aghberd at the command of the same King Vach'agan. His ancestors were the brave Vach'agan and Vach'e' whose deeds are mentioned in their proper place in our book;

Bab i Hrahatean of the princes of Atrpatakan who settled in Kapaghak and Koght';

Vahan i Varaz Yohanean, of the Madianats'ik' of Persia, a Jacobite by confession, who settled in Kambichan;

R'ostom i Varaz Ak'oyean, who came from the district of Stahr in Persia and settled in the village of Kaghankaytuk in the district of Uti;

Zarmihr i Varaz K'urdak'ean and Mahmat i Sheroyean, sons of the lords of Dailam, who left Dailam to settle in lands granted them in Aghuania by the king.

All these names have been written in the archives of Caliph 'Abd al-Malik' so that if any of them should be found to have become Diophysites, they may be destroyed by the sword or imprisonment. Thus was peace brought to all the churches of Aghuania.

## 11.

[We omit the translation of chapter 11 which deals with doctrinal matters. Charles Dowsett's excellent translation of this chapter is available [here](#).]

## 12.

***The demands for taxes made on Varaz Trdat, prince of the Aghuans; his travel to the Byzantines where he left his sons as hostages; his return to his own land; and the seating of Mik'ayel on the [patriarchal] throne of the Aghuans after Sime'on.***

With the complete collapse of the kingdom of Persia and the increasing power of the Arab people in the south, the level of taxes on the land grew, especially in the eastern regions. Prince Varaz Trdat was then paying tribute to three nations—the Khazars, the Arabs, and the Byzantines. The severest harassment came from the Byzantines, for he and his sons were detained in the royal city by the emperor. [Varaz Trdat] gave his sons as hostages and then he himself fell sick and remained there. It is said that the air of that country

brings disease to foreigners who enter the country in the spring, the season of sicknesses, and for that reason the hair and the beard immediately fall out. Now it came about that one day during Varaz Trdat's long stay, the emperor of the Byzantines selected some precious jewels, and summoned the prince of Aghuania. He showed them to [Varaz Trdat], and cunningly said: "In my house there are jewels more precious than these, and I shall give them to you, O prince crowned by God, for they suit you." At that point five years had passed since the prince had come to Byzantium. Because of this, through God's help, he was able to free himself. He returned to his own land and after that gave this Eastern land to the Arabs, paying taxes to them alone.

Now it happened that an unbearable famine broke out within the borders of Aghuania during the days of this same Varaz Trdat. Some folk told the following legend about it: "I, millet from the district of Shakashe'n, lay hidden in the field of Kaku, and many buyers passed me by and would not purchase me. Then came good times when my brother Famine ruled, and lo! I appeared on the tables of Prince Varaz Trdat and *Kat'oghikos* Eghiazar, and those who ate me got blood in their veins. Do not blame them."

Gagik and Vardan, the sons of Prince Varaz Trdat of Aghuania, were then hostages in the hands of the Byzantines. They had remained in a dark prison for 12 years because of the confusion brought about by the emperor; the surrender of the land of the East to the Arabs by their father. Now when the Byzantine emperor Justinian died and Vardan Philippicus ruled [A.D. 711-713], a man who belonged to the Armenian nobility, he recalled those who had been confined in that dim fortress. The emperor ordered that they be freed from their unbearable sufferings. The sight of their eyes was enveloped in darkness. They were gradually brought back into the light, and the king gave them gifts and sent them back to their own land. He gave Gagik a relic of the life-giving Cross, the light of the world. When he had arrived there he gave the great gift to Mik'ayel, *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans. They erected the Lord's Cross which had this inscription: "Christ God, remember how You willingly suffered on this Cross for our salvation, accept this Cross which You gave to those who fear You, forgive the transgressions of myself, Mik'aye'l, *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans, and have mercy on this land of Aghuania, delivering it from all temptations, so that on the day of Your coming, we may be worthy to stand at Your right hand. I pray also for Gagik, Your servant, and his sister Mariam, and the great goldsmith Varazoy."

---

[129]

### 13.

#### ***Concerning the meeting convened by Mik'aye'l, kat'oghikos of the Aghuans to prevent marriage between near relatives.***

After Sime'on who had occupied the throne of the patriarchate of Aghuania for 35 years, the blessed Mik'aye'l succeeded him. Now in his days a consanguinous marriage took place among the princes of Aghuania: Varazoy, son of Vaxtang and grandson of Varazman married his first cousin, Vardanuhi, who was also the grandchild of Varazman. Lord Mik'aye'l excommunicated them, saying: "Do not dare to do this, for you are grandchildren of the same grandfather." But then Varazoy had the ruinous idea of writing to the *kat'oghikos* of Iberia/Georgia who was named T'alile'. He asked him to bless the illegitimate marriage. And that malevolent man decreed that "If you are of my confession, be blessed. But if you accept the Aghuanian tradition, you should know [what the position is]." Then Mik'aye'l, patriarch of the Aghuans, convened an assembly of the clergy of his Church. He summoned the noteworthy man Salomon, who was abbot of the blessed monastery of Mak'enots' and who at the time was the glory of the Armenians. Gathering all of them in the monastery of Berd in Shamk'or, [Mik'aye'l and the council] unanimously cursed the House of Varazoy. At the same hour, the Arabs came and cut one son's throat with a sword on the breast of his mother. They killed the other son by having him dragged behind a horse. Those assembled wrote a letter to the Iberian T'alile' asking him: "Why did you dare to violate the canons of the disciples of the holy apostles who assembled in

Antioch and excommunicated Paul of Samosata from the Holy Church and established the rule that 'no one should dare to marry a woman who is his relative'? Moreover, Saint Athanasius stipulated that 'this is not marriage but fornication'. The venerable Basil said the same thing about such behavior. Now we, a council of the Orthodox, also excommunicate you together with all the other heretics, and offer redoubled praise to Christ, the just judge."

---

## **14.**

[We omit the translation of chapter 14 which deals with doctrinal matters. Charles Dowsett's excellent translation of this chapter is available [here](#).]

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book Three

---

[Page 130]

#### 15.

##### *What transpired during the days of Heraclius' son and grandson.*

The victorious Heraclius, emperor of Byzantium, who had won many battles left behind him the memory of his bravery throughout the world. His son Constantine reigned as emperor of the Byzantines for three years. In his day the Arabs conquered Syria and put under taxation the churches of the holy city of Jerusalem. It was then year 80 of the Armenian Era (631/632). Then [Constantine's] son Constans ruled for 29 years. In his fifth year the battle of Arabia took place. In his sixth year the Arabs came to Armenia. They took Dwin and enslaved 35,000 people. In his 19th year Lord Nerse's was seated as *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, reigning for 30 years. And it was the 111th year of the Armenian Era [A.D. 662/663]. [Nerse's] was the adopted [spiritual] father of this same Constantine, and at his expense he constructed a fold for the rational flock in K'aghak'udasht, that is, the church of Saint Gregory, and invited the emperor of the Byzantines to the consecration. [The emperor] was so astonished at the construction that he ordered the builders to follow him that they might construct a similar one in his palace. [The architect] however, never arrived, for he died on the way.

---

#### 16.

*The coming of Muhammad the Second to Armenia to subdue them; his quick traversal of Aghuania and passage through the Ch'oray Gates whereupon he learned about a rebellion of the Armenians; his return and arrival at the island in Lake Sewan, which he took; his defeat of the Armenian and Byzantine troops; how he took some of the princes with him to Naxijevan where he burned them alive; his departure to Syria where he died an evil death; and other important narrations.*

In 146 of the Armenian Era [697/698] Muhammad II came to Armenia. Hurrying through the land of the Aghuans, he entered Ch'oray. The Armenians, having rebelled, trapped the Arabs in Dwin, and killed 62,000 of them. They had called in many troops from Byzantium. In the same year the line of Saint Gregory came to an end. Muhammad turned back from Ch'oray and came and besieged the fortress on the island in Sewan for three years. He took it and put to the sword whoever he found in it. Then, crossing [westward] through Armenia, he struck at Byzantium and the Armenians [living under Byzantine rule]. The ones he was unable to seize, he set a trap for swearing a trecherous and false oath, and so assembled all the chiefs of the Armenians.

He took them to the city of Naxijeuan where he put 800 men into the churches and then burned them alive. He similarly immolated 400 men at Xram and put the remainder to the sword. The cause of this destruction was the spirit of error which then animated them, since they all had insulted and ridiculed the patriarch and troubled and harassed the priests and clerics. Although the Armenians sustained that blow, nonetheless, Lord God did not fail to exact vengeance on Muhammad. When he reached Syria, he grew sick with a horrible and fatal illness. After barely living for seven months in the agonies of death, he gave up the ghost and perished. He was buried three times and each time the earth threw him up, since it would not receive his loathsome corpse. Then they took a dog and spitted it to Muhammad's body, and only thus would the earth cover that wicked one.

After this they took Sheroy, prince of the Aghuans, and the nobles to Taro'n and then on to Syria. And it was the 153rd year of the Armenian Era [704/705]. The same year they took the lord of Shirak to Syria. Two years later, Mruan, prince of the Arabs, came to Alania, but was unable to enter it. The lord of the Khazars arose with 80,000 troops and took Aghuania. And it was the 158th year of the Armenian Era [709/710].

---

[131]

## 17.

### ***The coming of the Arab prince Abdl Aziz to the Aghuanian city of Partaw; and concerning the death of two brothers, Mankik and Mirdazat.***

After two years, in the year 160 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 711/712] the Arab prince Abdl Aziz ['Abd al-Aziz ibn Hatim ibn al-Bahili, governor (*ostikan*) of Arminiya, 705-709] came to Aghuania and sat in Partaw. They brought before him Mankik and Mirdazat, two brothers who were of noble birth, and subjected them to many different types of torture because of their Christian faith. The venerable Mankik inherited the name of a martyr and was so crowned by Christ. His precious relics were placed in the great church of Saint Gregory in Partaw. His brother Mirdazat, however, who could not endure the torments, renounced Christ God before the assembled multitude. But later he repented and atoned for his apostasy with many bitter tears. For the rest of his life he made his tears a font of expiation and washed away the stain of the sin he had committed. He lamented from the bottom of his heart to Him who knows that which is hidden and remained afflicted with unconsolable grief unto the release of his soul. He who had mercy and compassion on him received him among the martyrs, and wonderful miracles were seen at the time of his death.

In the same year 'Abd al-Aziz crossed to the far side of the Kur River. Three years later Mslima [Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik] came, wrecked Darband, and entered the Khazars' [territory]. But he was obliged to abandon his army and all its equipment there, even employing his concubines as his rearguard. The Er'anshahik Vach'agan who was one of the patricians of Aghuania, a brave and capable prince and a skilful archer, was stationed with his troops at his rear. When the Khazars pursued him, they were defeated and put to flight. Thus delivered, Maslama entered Iberia/Georgia. Now in the summer of the year 174 [of the Armenian Era (A.D. 725/726)] there was a plague among the livestock, and in the winter a census was made by Hert' [Harith ibn 'Amr al-Ta'i] which subjected man and beast and all regions of the country to servitude by the imposition of heavy taxes. At the same time Juanshir, prince of Aghuania, was killed by the Amet'duk'. Smbat, prince of the Armenians, died in the same year. In the year 175 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 726/727] there was a severe famine. Three years later Jar'ah [Jarrah ibn Abdullah al-Hakami, governor (*ostikan*) of Armenia, 722-725, 729-730] passed a second time through the Abkhaz to the Khazars. The following year the son of the lord of the Khazars arose, killed Jarrah, and took Dzagik prisoner.

In the year 180 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 731/732] Maslama rebuilt Darband in the name of the Arabs. He did not destroy the patriarchal residence of the East, however, which is still there.

## 18.

***Concerning Step'annos, bishop of Siwnik', his travel to Byzantium and bringing back of books which previously had not been found in the East; his death; and the punishment God sent.***

In this period Step'annos of Siwnik', who as a lad was already literate and versed in the study of the scriptures, happened to argue with the general (*aspet*) of the Armenians, Smbat, who was a Diophysite. Leaving him unconvinced, [Step'annos] went to Byzantium where he found a certain orthodox hermit with whom he remained and studied. Now the Diophysite Smbat wrote to the emperor of the Byzantines, saying: "A heretic named Step'annos who left these parts is now living with a hermit with such and such a name." The emperor was furious and summoned [Step'annos] to the court. The hermit advised him to say that he was a homeless, stateless beggar when he stood before the emperor. Now when the tyrant heard this, his anger subsided. Then Step'annos found the courage to say to the emperor: "I ask you to order that the chests of books be opened." When he found there a book bound in gold concerning the faith, [Step'annos] brought it to him. And when the emperor had read it, he sent Step'annos to the city of Rome to bring back three [additional] books which were in accord with the first, about the true faith. This was so that the land might be converted to the beliefs contained in those writings. It happened that when Step'annos had fetched these books from Rome, he ignored the autocrat's order and headed for the city of Dwin, since he wanted to teach his own land from them.

At the request of Babgen and K'urdoy, [Step'annos] was ordained to the episcopate of Siwnik'. After occupying the episcopate for one year, he was murdered in the district of Moz. They say that his death was caused by some loathesome women. [Step'annos'] body was taken to the chamber of Arkazean and from there was taken and laid to rest at T'anatats' monastery.

The episcopate of Siwnik' was accorded third place among the bishoprics of Armenia because of the venerable Step'annos' action in bringing these writings from Rome. Now a certain hermit named Noah (Noy) saw a vision in which Step'annos, his chest covered with blood, stood before the Savior and said: "See this, O Lord, for Your judgement is just." Then [Step'annos] notified [Noah] that [divine] anger was about to be visited on the district and he appealed to them to pray. Then an impenetrable darkness descended over the borders of Moz, and the earth shook for forty days, and some 10,000 souls were swallowed up. Because of this [the place] was called Vayots' Dzor (Valley of Sighs/Woe).

## 19.

***Among the books of bishop Step'annos of Siwnik' is this narration about the destruction of the city of Ilion (Troy) and the building of Rome.***

In the days of Abdan the Judge, Troy was taken as follows. This city was in the country of the Achaeans, adjacent to the Peloponnese west of Macedonia in the land of Europe. In that period there was no king of Greece and the whole land was ruled over by princes. Troy was a great city without an equal anywhere on earth. In those days a certain young man from among the princes of the city went to the town of Thessalonica, which is to the east of Macedonia, for recreation, and was received by the grandees of the city. Falling in love with the daughter of a great man, he abducted her and brought her to the city of Troy. When her parents

sought for her, they realized that she had been carried off by the young man. Writing a letter to the people of Troy, they received an arrogant reply. [The father] read it aloud to his people, and thirsting for revenge, they called on all the surrounding peoples to help them. They drew up a countless army and waged war with Troy for fifteen years, ruining the entire country. Then they came up with a different strategy. They sent a conciliatory message to its inhabitants, saying: "The gods of Troy are great, and because of them our strength has failed. Let us make peace and be friends from now on. And let us honor the gods of Troy with gifts." Convincing them of this, [the Greeks] built 2,000 hollow wooden horses and placed 40,000 soldiers in them. Decorating the horses with gold and silver, they put them on carts and brought these ruinous gifts to the city gate. There the herald proclaimed: "Here are gifts for your gods of Troy." These horses were 20 cubits in height, and since they were unable to get them through the city gate, they demolished part of the wall. At the designated time for coming forth they took possession of the opening and a multitude of soldiers went in. Then the entire city including old men and children was put to the sword. [The Greeks] then took the women captive and boarded their ships to return to their own land in Asia. But a fierce wind blew from the east and drove their ships 2,500 miles off course, and cast them upon a foreign country called Italy. Now they wanted to navigate again to their own country, but the captive women, so that they not become slaves, set the ships on fire in the middle of the night. Not a single one remained. And so, when the men saw what had occurred, they remained in that land against their will, and married the captive women. After a long time had passed, a leader whom they had appointed from among themselves, a certain Romulus, built a city 25 miles from the sea, and named it Rome, after his own name. These became the Roman people. This occurred 441 after the taking of Troy. When the 444th year came, Philip sat as king in Rome. Now 1,000 years after the building of Rome, Constantine transferred [the capital] of the kingdom from there to Byzantium, which is now called Constantinople.

---

[134]

## 20.

### *Events which occurred in Aghuania in the third century of the Armenian Era.*

In this period, the tyranny of the severe and cruel race of Southerners had spread to the ends of the earth, and like fire had destroyed all the beauty and glory of humankind. The time of this rebellion may be understood from these words of Saint Paul: "The judge is standing before the door and the hour of terror, the dreadful and impartial day, is near" [James 5.9]. Thus did the bestial Ishmaelite Hagarenes seize the good things of the world for themselves. Land and sea now heeded these precursors of the Antichrist, these children of perdition. Here in our House of the Aghuans there were great privations because the Arabs, in accordance with the corruption of that people, had snatched the capital city of Partaw away from the Aghuanian princes. Just as they had established the primary seat of their realm in Damascus in Syria, so here in Aghuania they established their court in Partaw and sucked dry the wealth of the land. One of them came from the court to Partaw. Then the Armenians out of concern for the people of the land sent their patriarch Lord Esayi and his bishops to him. Now it happened that the princess Vardanuhi, who had been afflicted by the judgement of God, heard about the arrival [of the Armenian *kat'oghikos*] went before him to win his compassion on her terrible sufferings. For she had drunk the cup of bitterness from the hand of the Lord, in accordance with the scriptures. The venerable patriarch of the Armenians was moved by the woman's tears. He took up residence in her house and offered prayers to God throughout the night, that He might remove the anathemas of former patriarchs. [Lord Esayi] then conferred with the *kat'oghikos* of the Aghuans, Lord Solomon, and his bishops and he removed the bonds placed on her by his predecessors. The afflicted woman was saved by the prayers of both of them.

God granted life to Varaz Trdat, son of Varazman, although his son Step'annos died prematurely and his brother Varazman was drowned in the Kur River, which became his grave after he had lost his way. His brother Juansherik remained as his heir. This much had happened up to this point.

At the end of the 270th year of the Armenian Era [A.D. 821/822] some chosen man from the Arabs secretly arose from Partaw. They went and pillaged the district of Amaras, capturing some 1,000 people. Then they fortified themselves in a place called Shikak'ar in the district of Mets Irank'. But then the brave and handsome Lord Sahl i Smbatean Er'anshahik, with his powerful brothers and their forces, attacked them at dawn. They killed and scattered all of them, freeing the prisoners as though from the claws of a lion. In the same year the world-wrecking Arab Sewada [Sawada ibn 'Abdu 'l-Hamid al-Djahhafi] who was named Awar'anshah ("King of the Looters"), raided within the borders of the Armenians. Looting the entire land he turned upon Siwnik' and fortified himself in the Berdategh hamlet of Shaghatu, which is in the district of Tsghakats'. Now Vasak, lord of Siwnik', called in Babak (Baban) from Persia and defeated [Sewada] and put him to flight. The lord of Siwnik' died that same year, and Babak took to wife the daughter of Vasak, lord of Siwnik'. In the same year Lord Nerseh i P'ilippean killed Varaz Trdat i Step'annosean and slaughtered his son on his mother's breast, stealing all his belongings. This Varaz Trdat was of the Mihrakan clan which inherited Aghuania from father to son. He was the eighth ruler after Varaz Grigor, the first prince of Aghuania. Thereafter the province of Baghk' revolted from the impious Babak who came from Persia, seized and ruined the land and put the women and children of Baghk' to the sword. The following year Babak passed into the district of Geghark'uni. He put to the sword about 15,000 inhabitants and burned the great monastery of Mak'enots'. Only the water-mill remained. And it was the year 276 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 827/828].

[135] After two years Babak defeated Tawusi [Muhammad ibn Humaid al-Tusi] and persecuted some 150,000 folk. The following year Babak struck at Ibrahim son of Ghet' [Ibrahim ibn al-Laith ibn al-Fadl]. In the same year Dawon and Sapuh, two men who simulated love and peace, killed Step'annos called Abl Asad, who had called in Babak and had defeated the Baghakanets'ik' who with swords and spears had destroyed the district of Berdzor and the towns of Ur'eats', Kar'nakash, Hakari, and Tap'ar'. Once again they rebelled against Babak. Opposing him in battle, they fortified themselves in the fortress of Goroz and held the following districts for 12 years: Verin (Upper) Vaykunik', Berdzor, Sisakan, Haband, Amaras, Pazkank', Mxank', and Tri-gawar'. Later on Abl Asad's associates seized his assassins and tortured them to death. Esayi, called Abu Muse, a man of peace, Abl Asad's sister's son, seized these same districts and ruled over them all. And in the same year Babak crossed the Arax River from Persia and dwelled in the district of Amaras. He began by talking words of peace to persuade them to submit to him. To gain time some [outwardly] repented and submitted to him, but subsequently, having deceived him, they rebelled. Babak left there a certain general named Rostom with an army, and returned to his own country in Atrpatakan in Persia. He commanded him not to do battle with the fortress, but to bring it to submission peacefully. Rostom ignored Babak's command, however, and waged war against those who had fortified themselves in the stronghold. The men of the fortress, trusting in the power of Christ and carrying crosses and the relics of the saints before them, inflicted a severe defeat on the Persian brigade.

It is said that at the same time a certain Serop who was bishop of Amaras went to Rome and asked the emperor for a piece of the relics of the saints, which was granted to him. It is rumored contrary to all writings that this was the right arm of Saint Gregory with which one blesses the holy chrism. These are, however, surprising and terrible things to assert. They say that Saint Gregory received the tradition from Caesarea by the authority of the Greek patriarchs, and that he himself could not bless the oil, but that the Armenians received the oil from Caesarea down to the Council of Chalcedon. Later, when they had grown stronger, they separated from them and in their opposition managed to establish the right to bless the oil themselves. [They claim that] this is a mere custom taken from [the biblical Book of] Chronicles and that it is not orthodox, but nonsensical and heretical.



***The trip of Mamun, prince of the Arabs, to Byzantium where he perished; a brief account of these matters.***

In the 280th year of the Armenian Era [A.D. 831/832] Mamun the Arab decided to attack the Byzantines. After building a hundred ships he filled them with 100,000 strong men. Then taking to the water he went to besiege the great city of Constantinople. When news of this reached the Byzantines they immediately hurried out along another part of the sea, encircled and attacked the enemies of the cross of Christ. [The Byzantines] defeated and killed all of them, including Mamun himself. In this same victory they sailed against the Arab ships and fed their multitudes to the sword and the waters until not a single one remained alive. These great blows suffered by the Arabs came to pass thanks to the great power of the life-giving Cross of Christ.

Three years later a certain amir Badsghi [Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali al-Badhghisi] arrived by order of the prince of the Arabs named the Amir Mumin in the city of Naxijewan. There he seized a young man named Yovhan who was cruelly tortured because of his Christian faith and was martyred during Lent, shortly before Easter Day. The luminous brilliance of his relics astounded the enemy who departed in the night. None of the Christians knew about this. It was known only to Him who crowned him a martyr. Now the next year there were heavy rains for forty days and the Kur River filled to overflowing and flooded the land for fifteen *parasangs* over its usual limits. There emerged from the Caspian Sea a dragon-fish as big as a mountain which swallowed the fishermen's fish into its belly, and the fishermen labored in vain. However, eventually the sailors came up with a plan. They gathered in one place and, with their swords, stabbed at the fish in one spot near its tail until it died, and the Kur carried it away to wherever it came from. After that it was easy for the fishermen to catch fish, for they came as though released from prison.

In the same year Lord Dawit', *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, died and he cursed those who stole the land of Saint Gregory. [The thieves] were these: Abdl Melk' [son of] Jahab, who was killed by the sword; Abdl Asur son of Harch, and Abu Jap'r Aratsats'i both of whom were taken to Partaw and flayed alive. We learned this information concerning the court of the caliph: to the right of the court sits the chief of the *shurta* who is greater than the chief of the executioners elsewhere, and on the left the judge and the amir of the Treasury who render justice and [receive] the payment of taxes from the entire world. At the ninth hour [plaintiffs] appear before them, and on the following day they receive the verdict. They also administer the public services.

[137] Now in the year 286 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 837/838] 12,000 horsemen suddenly arose from Baghdad and attacked the country of the Aghuans. Sahl i Smbatean, who was of the Zarmirhakan clan of kings, became aware of this. Having as his ally the great martyr George, [Sahl] lifted his eyes heavenward and met them like an eagle swooping down on helpless birds. He struck at them and scattered them over the plains, putting them to flight. In the same year the same Lord Sahl i Smbatean captured the rebel Babak, the murderous, world-destroying, bloodthirsty beast, and delivered him into the hands of the caliph. For his efforts he received from the court a fine reward, for he received sovereignty over Armenia, Iberia/Georgia, and Aghuania, to rule authoritatively and regally over all.

In the year 287 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 838/839] Caliph Abraham went with a large army to the kingdom of the Byzantines and took the great city of Amorium by sword and enslavement. And then he returned home. He is Apu Sahak. In the same year the Lord of Lords Yovhanne's, who became lord of Armenia, Iberia/Georgia, and Aghuania, supplicated the court a second time for the three lands of Bulxar, Xoyta, and Patgos.

And in this year from the direction of the Khazars locusts came which were of extraordinary size, larger than sparrows. And they gobbled up a portion of the land of the Aghuans.

Two years later the winter was very severe, and it afflicted and brought death to many animals and shepherds.

In these days the Baghakanats'ik' came and did damage to the districts of Sisan, Tri, and Amaras. Then Esayi, called Abu Muse, rose against them and routed them.

After an additional two years had passed, Khazar Patgos, a violent and merciless man, came and perished in the same year. His son came, however, and took our land by the sword and enslavement, burned down many churches, and went to Baghdad. Returning from there at the court's command and expense, he built up the city of Gandzak in the district of Arsakashe'n in the year 295 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 846/847]. After this he raided the land of Siwnik', enslaved the territory of Baghk', and descended into the district of Aghahe'j to a village called Ark'uet. There he ordered that the church dedicated to Saint Gregory should be burned down. But then a divine miracle occurred: a horseman on a white horse rushed out of the church in the sight of all, and galloping into his camp, threw the impious man and his soldiers into confusion and put them to flight across the mountain called Eghjer Xoy. There a fierce storm overtook them and only those who relied on their horses alone were able to escape, while those with saddled horses and [their] loot perished on top of the mountains. And the prisoners remained in peace, glorifying God.

[138] In the fulfilment of the 300th year of the Armenian Era [A.D. 851/852] the Christian princes of Armenia and Aghuania paid the price of their sins. For it was in this year that they were taken prisoner, cast into irons by the Arabs, exiled from their homes, and sent against their will to Baghdad. There the impious ones tortured them and forced them to abandon the faith. While many of them died the eternal death by forsaking the inviolable treasure of the holy faith, a certain venerable Shapuh Artsruni and another excellent man from among the Armenian nobles chose a martyr's death to a worthless life. The Arab tyrant ordered that they be bound in iron fetters and thrown into the Euphrates River. For many days flaming torches were seen over the river, and the spiteful caliph ordered men to descend into the river, retrieve the bones, and burn them. Now it happened that when the divers descended, the light went out, but when, after searching the waters, they emerged, the light shone in all its glory again. Then the caliph summoned Jap'r, bishop of the Syrians, and commanded him to search for the relics. The bishop went to the bank of the Euphrates and sent the divers down. When they found the bones of the blessed men, [Jap'r] took them to his own church and had a written memorial made for them.

In this year torrential rains unexpectedly poured down on the district of Mets Irank' and the flooding inundated the village of Dastakert at the junction of the rivers and carried off 800 tents belonging to the shepherds who had come to graze their flocks in the Caucasus in the summer. Lord Sup'an died in Vayots' Dzor in that same year. In the next year [A.D. 852/853] Bugha came to Armenia and killed Sahak Ismayelean in the city of Tiflis. He held Armenia for three years and then he transferred the princes and their wives to Baghdad. Then, in the fourth year [A.D. 855], Muhammad son of Xart' [Muhammad ibn Khalid] came and Lord Vasak Gabur' died.

In the 318th year of the Armenian Era [A.D. 869/870] the horrible earthquake at Dwin occurred. It remained active for an entire year and swallowed up some 120,000 people. Behold how fully humankind resembles the grass.

# Movses Dasxurants'i's

## *History of the Aghuans*

### Book Three

---

[Page 139]

#### 22.

***The siege of Partaw by the son of Shex and the armies of the Armenians and the Aghuans; Samue'l usurps the dignity [of kat'oghikos] and goes to Dwin.***

[The siege of Partaw occurred] during the time when there was agitation between Esayi son of Shex [Isa ibn Shaikh ibn Khalid al-Shaibani, governor of Armenia from ca. 870] and his official Muhammad, son of Ablvahd, called Eme'mik [Muhammad ibn 'Abdu 'l-Wahid al-Yamani]. [Esayi] assembled his armies from the Syrian areas in alliance with Prince Asot. [Ashot] also assembled the Armenian troops together with the Aghuan princes. And they went and camped at the gate of Partaw where they fought skillfully for 13 years. At that time Yovse'p', patriarch of the Aghuans, passed away [ca. 875] and the Aghuan princes had no time to elect a successor to the patriarchal throne. Now it came about that Samue'l, bishop of Mets Koghmank', connived with a priest Misaye'l called "the philosopher." [Samue'l] cunningly gave his episcopate to Misaye'l without ordination by the right hand of a superior, while Samue'l himself received an invalid ordination from the bishop he himself had just appointed. News of this reached the army and caused a great disturbance among the Aghuan princes, and one of this group informed Lord Ge'org, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians. The latter wrote to the prince of the Armenians about canonical regulations and requested that he facilitate matters and resolve them peacefully. In the meantime, [Samue'l] had cleverly established peace and agreement among the chiefs and princes of the Aghuans, resulting in their excommunication by the Armenians. Ashot, prince of the Armenians, demanded that the arrangement of Saint Gregory regarding ordination from the Armenians be observed. The great prince of the Armenians then wrote to patriarch Ge'org about the princes who, with the consent of the all the Aghuans, had meanwhile become reconciled to the irregularities of Samue'l and Misaye'l. Then the capricious Samue'l travelled to Dwin to be ordained again, this time by Ge'org, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians. This transpired in the days when Ashot was prince of the Armenians, in 326 of the Armenian Era [877/878].

The same prince Ashot of Armenia, with the help of the bishop Soghomon and the patriarch Geo'rg, wisely renewed sermonizing in Siwnik' which had been interrupted for a long time.

[140] Now in these same times, in 336 of the Armenian Era [887/888] Ashot Bagratuni was seated on the throne of his kingdom among the Armenian people. For a long time the dignity of king had ceased to exist in the house of T'orgom. In the 342nd year of the Armenian Era [893/894] the Tachiks ("Arabs") came to Armenia and seized the land, subjecting it to the yoke of slavery and tribute. Patriarch Ge'org was seized by them and taken to Partaw in iron fetters. Then the pious Hamam revived the fallen kingship of the house of the Aghuans just as Ashot Bagratuni had done in Armenia. These things took place at the same time. This

same Hamam, who was very guilty of shedding his brother's blood on account of this vain life, then displayed great and tireless piety toward the Church and all the poor and needy. This was to atone for his great sins against God. He had Ge'org, the great patriarch of the Armenians, freed from the prison of the impious Tachiks at great cost. Then with great solicitousness he sent him safely back to the Armenians. Now it happened that four years later, when New Year's Day coincided with Easter Day [898/899], Abu Ali, who was the Haykazuni (Armenian) prince of the Aghuans was slain by his full brother, Smbat. His clan mourned him greatly. The same year Smbat, king of the Armenians, son of Ashot Bagratuni, assembled his troops and raided the land of Asorestan. However, the Arabs resisted them and caused them to flee back to Armenia. And thus, his entire enterprise had been undertaken in vain. Ashot the Haykazuni prince and some of his army died as a result.

In these same times Abu Mruan, the great prince of Vaspurakan, was killed by his own troops. In the same year and for the second time the impious Tachiks arrived in the country of Armenia. At their command the eunuch [Yusuf, lieutenant of Muhammad Afshin ibn Abu 'l-Sadj Divdad] left the court of Partaw and came to Armenia. He was a shameless and godless man who plundered and destroyed the churches of God wherever he went, and whenever he saw the cross of Christ, he ground it to dust. On his arrival in the land of the Armenians, King Smbat immediately fled. [Yusuf] seized the fortresses and the queen and her ladies, their sons, houses, sacred vessels, crosses, and much treasure, and took them into captivity. In the same period he raided Iberia/Georgia. Two brave Iberian generals, prince Ge'org and his brother Arewe's arose against him, and suffered a cruel death at his hands. Then the great patriarch of the Armenians, Ge'org died, and this was followed by the death of Ashot the prince of Siwnik'. The mourning women wept, saying: "May another year like this one not be seen on earth as long as the human race exists." And it was the 346th year of the Armenian Era [897/898]. However this was just the start of all the trials and tribulations to befall the Armenians. After a short while the divine punishment which was in store for the land fell on the great King Smbat himself. Power from On High abandoned him and he walked the road of his own destruction and that of the Armenians, for he went before the beast-like prince of the Arabs whose ways were those of a dog rather than of a man. He seized the king, who had come there of his own accord, and crucified him. Then the sound of mourning and lamentation was heard in the House of T'orgom, and ruin overtook the land completely. And it was the 363rd year of the Armenian Era [914/915]. But God took vengeance for the murder of Smbat, since when that inhuman Arab left Armenia and passed through the land of Syria intending to rule over the Arabs, he fell into the hands of an Arab prince, was buried alive and killed. Now when these times had passed and when the Arab people had become exhausted, yet another people appeared. They were called Dailamites. Their chief was a certain man named Salar, and he widely extended his authority and came to rule over the Aghuans, Persians, and Armenians. He came to Partaw and made it his immediately.

In this same period a people called Ruzik, who had a strange and foreign appearance, attacked. [They came] from the lands of the north and advanced like a whirlwind over the inland sea of the east, the Caspian. They reached Partaw, the Aghuan capital, and after no more than three attempts [captured the city]. Unable to resist, the city was put to the sword. They expropriated all the attractive possessions of the inhabitants. [The Ruzik] were besieged, but were in no way harmed, since they were invincible due to their strength. Now it happened that the women of the city came up with a plan to serve them the cup of death, but they learned about this treachery and killed the women and their children without mercy. After remaining there for six months they returned to their own land unexpectedly, taking along different types of booty, and leaving the city empty and deserted.

We know verifiably that folk from the line of Hayk intermarried with the Mihrakan clan and thereby ruled jointly over the prominent areas of Aghuania.

Above we recorded the names of the 10 kings from Vach'agan the Brave (*kaj*) to Vach'agan the Pious (*barepasht*), of whom Vach'agan the Brave alone built as many churches in the East as there are days in the year. After his death that line began to decline. Then the Mihrakans, who were [related to] the Sasanian clan, came from Persia and were established among the lords. Their names, from father to son, were as follows:

Mihr,  
Armayel,  
Vard,

Vardan the Brave who believed in Christ—it was not he who built the fortress of Gardman;

his son Vard fathered Varaz Grigor, first prince of Aghuania, who fathered four sons—Varaz P'eroz, Juanshir, Yezut-Xosrov, and Varazman

We shall give the names of their eldest sons for the information of the line of Hayk, while the others will be omitted. They are as follows: Varaz P'eroz, Varaz Trdat, Vardan, Nerseh *Dzndak* ("the Cruel"), who did harm to the heads of men, while the feet of the oppressed also were fettered and bound in iron chains. Through him many perished by fire and drowning. With the same [destructive] intentions Nerseh passed through the village of Hats'iwn on his way to Asorestan. Now because it was a Sunday, [Nerseh] left his comrades and went alone to the holy father Sime'on, guardian of the holy Cross. Concealing his identity, he prayed along with the others.

But then the blessed Sime'on boldly addressed him, saying: "Who are you? God has revealed to me your impiety which is destroying our land. Your children, profiting by your silence, perform many different iniquities which ruin the oppressed. Are you not that very Nerseh who goes to Asorestan to add to his evil deeds against the churches of the East? Now if you go to that country, you will never again see the land of your forefathers." Nerseh then fell at the feet of the old man but made no answer. Rather, he went along his way and died just as father Sime'on had said, and his lifeless body was brought back to his own land. Nerseh's son was Gagik, Gagik's son was Step'annos whose sister was Aprsamik. Varaz Trdat and his son Step'annos were killed at the same time by a relative named Nerseh P'ilippean at Xoradzor, called Dadoyi Vank'. After these calamities, the wife of the murdered one, who was as courageous as a man, took her surviving daughter Spram, and after a fatiguing night journey reached the fortress of Xach'en. Thinking about what would be good for her House, she married Spram to Atrnerseh, son of Sahl. [Sahl] was from the clan of Hayk and lord of Siwnik', and had seized by force the district of Gegham. His son Atrnerseh married this prudent woman. Fearing God, they lived their lives in piety and were beloved by their land.

[142] This Atrnerseh built the fortress of Handu and established his palace in the village called Vayunik', where the royal baths are. He was taken to Persia with the other princes and remained there many years. The lady Spram multiplied her benevolent works and built the wonderfully decorated Noravank' at great expense in the district of Sodk'. [When the church was completed] Atrnerseh was immediately released from the Tachik lands and ended this temporal life in peace. His sons were Grigor and Abuse't'. Grigor built the fortress of Hawaxaghats'i and extended his authority over that region. Grigor had five sons of whom the eldest, Abul, was killed by his kinsman Smbat. Another son, Sahak, who was called Sewaday, a brave and successful man, ruled as prince over the districts of Gardman, K'aws, and P'ar'na and imposed his suzerainty on the robber-chiefs of Dzoroyget. This man was a lover of letters and appointed writers to his House. Now even though the king of the Armenians, Smbat, fought him zealously, he could not bend him to his will.

Sewaday fathered two sons—Grigor and Dawit'. Grigor fathered Sewaday called Ishxananun and Atrnerseh. Ishxananun fathered four sons—Yovhanne's, Grigor, Atrnerseh, and P'ilippe'. The eldest son of Ishxananun, Yovhanne's, also called Senek'erim, was chosen by right hand of the Almighty which called him to be king.

Thus did Almighty God restore the long inactive kingdom through him. The king of Persia bestowed many splendid decorations on him and gave him his father's crown and horse. In the same year the Greek *magistros* who was named Dawit' sent a marvellous crown and an imperial purple [robe] in honor and praise of this man whom God had so favored. And [Yovhane's] received consecration as king from the right hand of the patriarch, to the glory of Christ.

---

[143]

## 24.

### *The names, years, and deeds of the Aghuanian patriarchs.*

It would be appropriate and proper to put in writing an accurate list of the names of the patriarchs. However, the [necessary documents containing the] deeds, dates, and names of our spiritual leaders who succeeded one another have been burned by the infidels. Moreover, their testaments, vessels, and resting-places are unknown to us and have not been brought to light. Thus for the knowledge of those who are interested in such matters we have recorded what little we do know.

The first cause of our illumination was Saint Eghishay/Elisha /Eliseus, a student of the blessed apostle Thaddeus, who was ordained in Jerusalem by Saint James. He came as the illuminator of three lands—Ch'oray, Lp'ink', and Aghuania—and died as a martyr in the last country. [Until] the Lord Saint Grigoris Pahlawik, the grandson of Saint Gregory, Illuminator of the Armenians, sat on the same throne in twofold glory, [there reigned]:

Saint Shup'haghisoy, *kat'oghikos* of the East who came from Jerusalem.

Lord Matt'eos.

Lord Sahak.

Lord Movse's.

Lord Pand.

Lord Ghazar.

Lord Zak'aria,

Lord Dawit'.

Lord Yovhan who became bishop of the Huns through the grace of the patriarch. We do not know details about him.

Lord Eremia. In his days the venerable Mesrob with great zeal invented an alphabet for the Aghuans as he had done for the Armenians and the Iberians/Georgians.

Lord Abas, who at the beginning of the Armenian Era transferred the patriarchal throne from Ch'oghay to Partaw; he was patriarch for 44 years, having been called from the episcopacy of Mets Irank'. During his tenure it became the custom to write "*Kat'oghikos* of Aghuania, Lp'ink' and Ch'oghay" on the address of [his] letters. They wrote to him from the Council of Dwin that he should speak of [Christ having] one nature, divine and human, and that he should add the words "[Christ] immortal, Who Was crucified" [to the Trisagion].

[144] They had learned this, inserted by the 200 holy fathers at the Council of Ephesus into the Trisagion, from Proclus, patriarch of Ephesus, and later from Timothy, patriarch of Alexandria, and Peter of Antioch when they approached the emperor Anastasius through Jacob, bishop of Mesopotamia. Now all of them had declared that the orthodox should say "immortal" and "was crucified", as is indeed so. The patriarch Abas had not previously stipulated this since prior to this time it had not been our custom to repeat this [formula]. In our land there are no heresies, however much you examine us. Subsequently, in the time of the *kat'oghikos* Ezr, Step'annos, bishop of Gardman, went and communed with him, and Gardman and Artsakh received this tradition, which now we all share.

Lord Viroy, 34 years. He freed the prisoners of Armenia, Iberia, and Aghuania from Shat' Khazar. He asked King Xosrov to write the title "Lord of Gardman and prince of the Aghuans" on letters to the governors of this country, and this is still written.

Lord Zak'aria, a holy man, 15 years. He pledged a guarantee for the great city of Partaw and by his prayers saved many from slavery. He consecrated a certain Vrt'anes bishop of Siwnik' without the consent of the Armenians.

Lord Yovhan, 25 years, called to the patriarchal throne from the episcopacy of Amaras.

Lord Uxtane's, 12 years. He cursed the Aghuanian lords because of their race-polluting marriages, for which they were put to death.

Lord Eghiazar, six years, from the episcopacy of Shak'i. He discovered the holy Cross hidden by Mesrob in the village of Gis. Taking a piece of the life-giving Cross, he covered it with gold to the value of 120 *dahekans* and wrote on it: "This is Eghiazar's." He ordered a feast-day for the Cross to be celebrated in Gis.

Lord Nerse's, from the episcopacy of Gardman, 17 years. Of erring mind, he wanted to confuse the whole House of Aghuania by misleading it into the Chalcedonian heresy. Cursed in body and soul, he was cut off from the glories of the Son of God by the Aghuans and the Armenians, and he received the portion reserved for heretics.

Lord Sime'on, one and a half years. He was the archdeacon of the [patriarchal] see who rid the land of Nerse's' disorders and established seven canons.

Lord Mik'ayel, 35 years. He was a deacon in Shak'i. He summoned the abbot of Mak'enots', Solomon, and cursed the lords of Aghuania who had married relatives of the third degree [of consanguinity]. Punishment befell them immediately and they died out.

They also anathematized the Iberian/Georgian leader T'alile', who permitted such impious marriages.

[145] Lord Anastas, 4 years.

Lord Yovsep', 17 years. His fifth year coincided with the 200th year of the Armenian Era [751/752]. He came to the patriarchal throne from the episcopate of Amaras.

Lord Dawit', 4 years. He also came to the throne from the episcopate of Amaras. He squandered the land and the vessels of the Church, and died after drinking poison given to him by traitors.

Lord Dawit', 9 years, from the episcopate of Mets Kueank'. He sold Dastakert and Sahmanaxach' to infidels.

Lord Matt'e'os one and a half years, from the episcopate of Kapaghak. He too died of poison administered by traitors.

Lord Movse's, 2 years.

Lord Aharon, 2 years.

Lord Solomon, half a year.

Lord Teodoros, 4 years, from the episcopate of Gardman.

Lord Solomon, 11 years.

Lord Yovhann's 25 years. He transferred the *kat'oghikos*ate to Berdak, the site of his summer residence, removing it from Partaw.

Lord Movse's, half a year.

Lord Dawit', 28 years, from the episcopate of Kapaghak. He had blessed the illicit marriage of the lord of Shak'i. Now the lay brother of the same lord asked him: "Where are you coming from, lord?" And he answered: "From your brother's house." And the prince said to Dawit': "May that tongue of yours which gave the blessing, never speak again, and may your right hand wither!" Now this came to pass at that very instant, nor was he healed to the day of his death.

Lord Yovse'p', 25 years, from the episcopate of Mets Kueank'. His 3rd year coincided with the 300th year of the Armenian Era [851/852].

Lord Samue'l, 17 years, from the episcopate of Mets Kueank'. He assumed the title himself, and was afterwards deposed by Ge'org, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians, but then [re]ordained by him at Dwin.

Lord Yunan, 8 and a half years. He was bishop of Dwin, Armenia. He went to Aghuania without the permission of the *kat'oghikos* Ge'org and was ordained there; he also was [re]ordained by the same Ge'org.

Lord Sime'on, 21 years. He was the court bishop of the Holy See who greatly adorned the Holy Cross with many ornaments.

Lord Dawit', 6 years, from the prelacy of the monastery of P'ar'isos.

Lord Sahak, 18 years, from the episcopacy of Mets Kueank'.

Lord Gagik, 14 years, from the episcopacy of Gardman. His 4th year coincided with the 400th year of the Armenian Era [951/952].

Lord Dawit', 7 years, from the episcopacy of Kapaghak.

Lord Dawit', 6 years. He was ordained by Anania, *kat'oghikos* of the Armenians.

Lord Petros, 18 years, from the episcopacy of Gardman.

Lord Movse's, 6 years from the prelacy of the monastery of P'ar'isos.

## End of Book Three





**This material, which is presented solely for non-commercial educational/research purposes, appears in C. J. F. Dowsett's *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movses Dasxuranc'i* (London, 1961), pp. xi-xx.**

---

## *History of the Aghuans*

### **Introduction**

**by C. J. F. Dowsett**

---

[List of Abbreviations](#)

[Page xi]

## INTRODUCTION

THERE exists as yet no critical edition of the Armenian text of the *Patmut'iwu Ałuanic*, nor is it easy to prepare in the West an edition which would have to take manuscripts now contained in the Matenadaran of the Armenian SSR in Erevan as its basis.<sup>1</sup> The present translation has been made largely on the edition of Šahnazarean,<sup>2</sup> the text of which was established on four copies, two made on manuscripts at Etchmiadzin, one on a Tabriz manuscript, and one on a Constantinople manuscript. The edition of Ēmin,<sup>3</sup> based upon two undated manuscripts, has also been consulted, but in view of editorial liberties taken with the text, less reliance has been placed upon it. In order to establish the most satisfactory reading of obscure words and phrases, the translator has had recourse to the following manuscripts: Nos. 217–21 of the Bibliothèque Nationale (referred to hereafter as P1–5 respectively);<sup>4</sup> Or. 5261 of the British Museum (BM);<sup>5</sup> Nos. 1485<sup>6</sup> and 1146<sup>7</sup> of the Mekhitarist monas-

<sup>1</sup> Such an edition is now reported to be in preparation at Erevan; see K. V. Trever, *Očerki po istorii i kul'ture Kavkazskoi Albanii IV v. do n.e.—VII v.n.e.*, Izd. Akad. Nauk SSSR, Moscow–Leningrad, 1959, p. 13, n. 3. This latter work is a useful survey and appreciation of the sources available for the study of the history of Albania, including our author; it arrived too late to be extensively referred to in the notes to this translation.

<sup>2</sup> K. Šahnazarean, *Patmut'iwu Ałuanic arareal Movsisi Kalankatuaçwoy . . .*, 2 vols., Paris, 1860; denoted below as S.

<sup>3</sup> M. Ēmin, *Movsisi Kalankatuaçwoy Patmut'iwu Ałuanic ašxarhi . . .*, Moscow, 1860. This edition was reprinted at Tiflis in 1912. Denoted below as E.

<sup>4</sup> See F. Macler, *Catalogue des manuscrits arméniens et géorgiens*, Paris, 1908.

<sup>5</sup> See F. C. Conybeare, *A Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the British Museum . . .*, London, 1913, p. 292. In this manuscript the *History of the Ałuank'* breaks off before the end of iii. 20 at fol. 244<sup>r</sup>; the folios 244<sup>r</sup>–245<sup>v</sup> contain, like VI, pp. 533–7, part of chapters 61 and 62 of the *Hamarōt patmut'iwu* of Kirakos Ganjakeçi. Conybeare has dated this manuscript too early; its script closely resembles that of the example dated 1628 in Y. Dašean, *Catalog der armenischen Handschriften in der Mechitaristen-Bibliothek zu Wien*, Vienna, 1895, Tafel ii, Nr. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Acquired in 1835 from Madras; undated; pp. 1–283 contain the *History* of Matt'ēos Urhayeci, pp. 284–322 the 'History of the priest Mesrob', pp. 323–533 the *History of Ałuank'* (put together in a very confused order, with many lacunae), pp. 533–7 a fragment of Kirakos (see note 5), pp. 541–53 a passage from Samuēl Aneçi.

<sup>7</sup> This manuscript reproduces with certain minor exceptions the confused text of No. 1485 with variants from a Qarabagh MS. sent to the monastery in 1842 by Bishop Hasan Ĵalalean and later returned to him. It is worth while noting that

tery of San Lazzaro at Venice (V<sub>1</sub> and V<sub>2</sub>), the variants from the Qarabagh MS. noted in the margin of the latter being referred to below as Q; a manuscript, formerly to be found at Aleppo and now in the library of the Catholicosate of Cilicia at Anthelias in Lebanon (Ant.);<sup>1</sup> and four lists of variants prepared by Xaçik Datean from four Etchmiadzin manuscripts against the text of Ēmin's edition and now in the library of the Mekhitarist monastery at Vienna (D<sub>1</sub>-4). It is hoped, therefore, that no important variant has escaped the translator's notice.<sup>2</sup>

Although there exists at present no adequate printed catalogue of the MSS. now in the Matenadaran—Karenean's catalogue of the Etchmiadzin MSS. of 1863<sup>3</sup> is very much out of date—we are nevertheless fairly well informed with regard to what manuscripts of the *History of the Aḡuank'* the library contains. In a series of articles in the review *Ararat* between the years 1895 and 1897, Datean gave a good description and appreciation of the manuscripts of this work then to be found at Etchmiadzin.<sup>4</sup> He divided them into two groups, Group 1 comprising Nos. [D]1682 (A.D. 1289),

the 'better manuscript' which H. Ačaṙean (*Nor baier*, Venice, 1913, pt. 1, p. 8) assumed to have been at the disposal of Ališan when compiling *Hayapatum* does not exist. Pencil marks in the copy of Ēmin's edition at San Lazzaro show that Ališan used Ēmin's edition. The discrepancies noted by Ačaṙean are extremely minor and probably misprints.

<sup>1</sup> A. Surméyan, *Catalogue des manuscrits arméniens se trouvant à Alep à l'Église des Quarante Martyrs*, ii (Jerusalem, 1935), p. 150. It belongs, not to Datean's Group 2, as Surméyan claims, but to his Group 1.

<sup>2</sup> I have not consulted the manuscript described in the *Hauptkatalog der Königlichen Universitätsbibliothek zu Tübingen: Verzeichnis der armenischen Handschriften von F. N. Finck und L. Gjandschezian*, xiii (Tübingen, 1907), p. 69. It is said there to be virtually the same text as that of Ēmin's edition; I have not been able to check the differences mentioned. For i. 26 (the canons of Vaçagan) I have quoted variant readings from MS. No. 131 (a *kanonagirk'* of A.D. 1098) of the library of the Cathedral of the Holy Saviour at New Julfa; to my knowledge this is the earliest manuscript to contain a document appearing also in the *History of the Aḡuank'*.

<sup>3</sup> Yakob Karenean, *Mayr çuçaḡ jeṙagir mateniç gradarani Srboy At'oroyn Eḡmiacni*, Tiflis, 1863. Nos. 1640 and 1679 contain the *History of the Aḡuank'*, later renumbered as 1682 and 1721 respectively (see A. Manandian, 'Die neue Numerierung der in Kareneans Katalog verzeichneten Handschriften', *Zeitschrift für armenische Philologie*, ii (Marburg, 1904), pp. 29-40). The latter are the numbers given by Datean, op. cit. below.

<sup>4</sup> X[açatur] V[ardapet Datean], 'Movsēs Kaḡankatuaçwoy Aḡuaniç Patmut'ean Mayr At'or matenadaranum gtnuac jeṙagir örinakner', *Ararat*, 1895, pp. 235, 333-88, 424; 'Niw't'er usumnasirut'ean Aḡuaniç Patmut'ean', *Ararat*, 1896, pp. 22, 67, 125, 176; 1897, pp. 67, 161. A number preceded by D below, except

[D]632 (A.D. 1761), and [D]250 (A.D. 1829), and Group 2 Nos. [D]633 (A.D. 1664) and [D]1721 (n.d.); the variants denoted by D<sub>1</sub>–3 refer to [D]1682, [D]632, and [D]250, while D<sub>4</sub> refers to ‘a Tabriz MS’. The most modern list of the manuscripts of the *History of the Aluank*<sup>1</sup> is that given in 1935 by H. Ačaṙean in volume vii of his *Etymological Dictionary*;<sup>1</sup> here he mentions Nos. [A]1531 (A.D. 1289 = D1682), [A]2626 (A.D. 1761 = D632), [A]2866 (A.D. 1829 = D250), [A]2561 (A.D. 1664 = D633), [A]1725 (17th century = D1721); also [A]3043 and [A]1087, both copied at Tabriz in 1839 from a copy belonging to E. Boré and one of which must be the manuscript from which the D<sub>4</sub> variants were taken; the eighth manuscript mentioned by Ačaṙean is No. 47 of the Lazarean Institute in Moscow, copied by Ėmin in A.D. 1849. One is to some extent able to determine the provenance of the Paris MSS. which are nineteenth-century copies prepared, with the exception of No. 220, by and for scholars. No. 217 (P<sub>1</sub>), according to a note on the title-page, was made on a copy of A.D. 1839, i.e. A3043 or A1087, both Tabriz MSS.; one may therefore expect similar readings from P<sub>1</sub> and D<sub>4</sub>. No. 218 (P<sub>2</sub>) was copied from a St. Petersburg MS. which Patkanean (p. iv) describes as made on a copy by Šahxatuni (i.e. A2866) of a manuscript of between A.D. 1279 and 1311 (i.e. A1531) and on another copied in or after A.D. 1675 (? A1725); one may therefore expect similar readings from P<sub>2</sub> and Patkanean. P<sub>2</sub> was later collated with a Scutari MS. of 1838, the variants from the latter being denoted in P<sub>2</sub> by the letter B. No. 219 (P<sub>3</sub>) was copied by Ėmin for Dulaurier; a colophon reproduced on pp. 274–5 shows that P<sub>3</sub> was copied on a MS. made by the scribe Łunkianos in A.D. 1761, i.e. A2646 from which the D<sub>2</sub> variants are taken. No. 220 (P<sub>4</sub>) was copied in 1857 in Šuša, from what manuscript is unknown; its readings almost invariably concord with those of BM, Q, V<sub>1</sub>, and V<sub>2</sub>. No. 221 (P<sub>5</sub>) was copied by Bannelier in 1859 from a manuscript copied in 1829, i.e. A2866 from which D<sub>3</sub> derives.

That the unexpected occurs is due either to my false deductions from fragmentary evidence or to the fallibility of copyists. The construction of a general stemma must be left to one with access to all the material.

<sup>1</sup> Ačaṙean, *Hayerēn armatakan baġaran*, vii (Erevan, 1935), pp. 157–8, s.v. *handratan*. A number prefixed by A below refers to the number of the manuscript according to this passage. See below, p. 15, n. 1.

Like A1725 and A2561, P4, BM, V1, V2, and Q are, in Datean's terms, Group 2 manuscripts, the rest belonging to Group 1. As Datean points out,<sup>1</sup> the editions of Ēmin and Šahnazarean are based upon Group 1 manuscripts, while the Russian translation of K. P. Patkanean,<sup>2</sup> as can be seen from his rendering of passages which differ in the two groups, also represents Group 1. One of the features of the present translation is that some consideration has been given to the variants of Group 2. Apart from isolated variants the latter differs from Group 1 in (a) containing the important passage otherwise missing from iii. 20 and which must have been in the original exemplar of the *History*;<sup>3</sup> (b) containing, in BM and P4 at least, after ii. 51, a chapter describing the history of the head of St. John Baptist which, being evidently a late interpolation, is not included in the translation below; (c) presenting quite different versions of matters concerning the Albanian Church at i. 9,<sup>4</sup> iii. 8,<sup>5</sup> and iii. 23.<sup>6</sup> With regard to (c), it appears that the readings of Group 2 were original, for Datean found that the oldest extant manuscript (D1682 = A1531) had been altered in these very places, probably by Łunkianos, the scribe of D632 = A2626 of A.D. 1761, which was copied from it.<sup>7</sup>

With the exception of V1, the folios of which have been bound together with no regard to their proper order, the sequence of the chapters of the *History* is the same in both groups. If this sequence was original, however, the compiler is seen to have been but little concerned with presenting his sources in their true chronological order. Some outstanding examples of confusion are to be found in chapters 11 and 12 of Book Two, where events concerning the role of the Khazars in the war between Heraclius and Xosrov are presented as follows:

- (a) II. 11, pp. 81–82. The Khazars attack Albania at Heraclius' command. Xosrov persuades them to withdraw, and they decide to attack again at some future date.

<sup>1</sup> *Ararat*, 1895, p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> *Istoriya Agvan Moiseya Kagankatvatsi, pisatelya X veka. Perevod s arm-yanskogo*, St. Petersburg, 1861.

<sup>3</sup> See C. J. F. Dowsett, 'A Neglected Passage in the *History of the Caucasian Albanians*', *BSOAS* xix (1957), pp. 456–68.

<sup>4</sup> Below, p. 8, n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> p. 195, n. 2, 3.

<sup>6</sup> p. 228, n. 1, 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ararat*, 1895, pp. 347–348. I have not been able to confirm these findings.

- (b) II. 11, pp. 83–86. ‘In the 38th year of Xosrov’, i.e. 628, the Khazars sack Partaw and besiege Tiflis; at the approach of the Persian army Heraclius tells the Khazars to withdraw and to return the following year, i.e. 629 (see ii. 14, p. 94, n. 1).
- (c) II. 12, pp. 86–87. ‘Then after that, in the 36th year of Xosrov’, i.e. 626, Heraclius allies himself with the Khazars and gives them their instructions.
- (d) II. 12, pp. 87–88. ‘At the beginning of the 37th year’ of Xosrov, i.e. 626 (but perhaps 627; see p. 87, n. 4), the Khazars raid Albania and Atrpatakan and send a messenger to Xosrov to summon him to surrender. Xosrov refuses and the messenger returns.
- (e) II. 12, pp. 88–90. Heraclius marches upon Persia and Xosrov is killed.

It is clear that the true order of these passages is either (c), (d), (a) (b), (e), or (c), (a), (d), (b), (e).

The earliest mention of a *History of the Ałuank*<sup>1</sup> occurs in connexion with the visit of Anania Mokaci, catholicos of Armenia (943–67), to Xaçēn, probably shortly after 958, when Gagik was catholicos of Albania (948–62).<sup>1</sup> Gagik suggests that he be consecrated, through Anania, by St. Gregory ‘as it has been from the beginning and as it is set down in the *History of the Ałuank*’ (*orpēs ew ēr i skzbanē leal ew kargeal i patmut’ean Ałuanic*). When Anania expresses a wish to consult this history—for he has heard that some claimed that Albania was converted before Armenia—he is not permitted to do so; the book is hidden because, says Anania, ‘it showed Albania to be an archbishopric and Armenia a catholicosate’. The history, however, falls into the Armenian catholicos’ hands by accident, and he claims to find ‘written therein the origins of the illumination [of the Albanians] which we liked [i.e. which pleased us], which we desired to see (*zor sirēak’, orum ew çangordn ēak’ tesut’ean*)’. Anania then quotes the following passage from this history:<sup>2</sup> ‘266 years after the apostles Bartholomew and Thaddaeus, in the 17th year of Trdat, king of Armenia, and [in the days] of Ufnayr, king of Albania, the Lord St. Gregory, of the family

<sup>1</sup> See Datean, *Ararat*, 1896, pp. 22–25; N. Akinean, ‘Movsēs Dasxurançi (koçuac Kałankatuaci) ew ir Patmut’iwn Ałuanic’, *Handēs Amsorea*, Vienna, 1953, pp. 13–15.

<sup>2</sup> Datean. *op. cit.* p. 25.



of Surean Pahlaw Aršakuni, Illuminator of Armenia, was dedicated to the throne of these same apostles, while Trdat and Urnayr, the kings of Armenia and Albania, were still in idolatry'. This is not in the *History of the Aluank'* as we know it. Step'annos Ōrbēlean,<sup>1</sup> relating the same events, says that in the *History of the Aluank'* consulted by Anania 'it was written with great accuracy that the first bishop in Albania was consecrated by St. Gregory, Illuminator of Armenia, at the request of Urnayr, king of Albania; that they remained submissive to the incumbents of the Armenian see for 440 years, and that the catholicoi of Albania accepted consecration at the hands of the Armenians, for those [the primates] of the Armenians were patriarchs, and those of the Albanians, archbishops; and this [continued thus] under 25 catholicoi of Armenia down to Lord Abraham'. This passage could be a digest, with added annotations, of MD i. 9 and ii. 48, but this is doubtful. Anania could not have read at ii. 47<sup>2</sup> that 'the see of Albania was established before that of Armenia and agrees with us [the Armenians]'.<sup>3</sup>

The next mention of a *History of the Albanians* occurs in Uxtanēs's *History of the Schism between the Armenians and Georgians*,<sup>3</sup> composed towards the end of the tenth century. Here there is real textual agreement. Uxtanēs's ch. lxiv, said by him to be from 'another history (*yaylmē patmut'enē*)', agrees word for word with part of MD ii. 47,<sup>4</sup> although the fact that this chapter in MD gives only a summary of Abraham's letter which is quoted more fully in Uxtanēs lxx<sup>5</sup> seems to indicate a common source rather than inter-borrowing. Some details are said by Uxtanēs lxxv<sup>6</sup> to be taken from the *History of the Aluank'* (*i patmut'enē iwreanç* [sc. *Aluaniç*]) or 'the historians of the Albanians (*patmagraçn Aluaniç*)';<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Step'annos Ōrbēlean, *Patmut'iwn nahangin Sisakan*, lii, ed. Tiflis, 1910, p. 279; tr. M. Brosset, *Histoire de la Sioumie*, i (St. Petersburg, 1864), p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Below, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> Uxtanēs, *Patmut'iwn bažanman Vraç i Hayoç*, ii (Vağaršapat, 1871), p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>5</sup> See below, p. 174, n. 1.

<sup>6</sup> p. 122; see below, p. 177, n. 1.

<sup>7</sup> This phrase is interesting; before supposing the existence of two or more compilers of the *History of the Aluank'*, however, one should bear in mind that Etišē, Movsēs Xorenaçi, and the authors of hagiographical works like that mentioned below were all in a sense 'historians of the Albanians', as testified by the fact that our compiler draws frequently upon them. I think one must resist the temptation to see in *patmagraçn* 'historians' (gen. pl.) a miswriting of *patma-*



it is more probable that these details are taken from MD i. 6 than ii. 48, and since the former chapter has its source in a hagiographical work, it is again possible that Uxtanēs and MD had common sources.

The mention of a *History of the Ałuank'* by the thirteenth-century writer Step'annos Ōrbēlean in his chapters xxv and xxvi must refer to the compilation of Movsēs, for the former chapter specifically mentions 'the middle (i.e. second) part'.<sup>1</sup> The first historian to indicate an approximate date for the *History* is Mxit'ar Aneçi,<sup>2</sup> who places it between Sebēos (7th century) and Lewond (8th century), but since Šapuh Bagratuni (9th century) is placed before Sebēos, the *History* is most likely also not in its proper chronological position in the list.

In the works of the authors hitherto mentioned no name is attached to the *History*. Early in the thirteenth century, however, Mxit'ar Goš<sup>3</sup> names a Movsēs Dasxurançi as the author, while his pupil Vanakan Vardapet similarly names him 'Movsēs, from the village of Dasxurēn'.<sup>4</sup> Later in the thirteenth century Mxit'ar Ayrivaneçi places 'Movsēs Ałuaniç', together with the tenth-century authors Grigor Narekaçi and Uxtanēs, between the years 981 and 1001.<sup>5</sup> Kirakos Ganjakeçi<sup>6</sup> in the same century, placing him between the tenth-century authors John Catholicos and

<sup>1</sup> St. Orb. xxv, ed. Tiflis, pp. 99-100: *yAłuaniç Patmut'eann i miġin hatorn*; see below, p. 175, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Mxit'aray Aneçwoy patmut'iwn*, ed. K'. P. Patkanean, St. Petersburg, 1879, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> See Ľ. Ališan, *Hayapatum; patmiġk' . . . Hayoç*, Venice, 1901, p. 175; C. J. F. Dowsett, 'The Albanian Chronicle of Mxit'ar Goš', *BSOAS* xxi (1958), p. 476.

<sup>4</sup> See Ališan, *ibid.*, where no references are given; I have been as yet unable to trace this passage in Vanakan's "short historical notes"; to the question 'Who is the historian of the Ałuank'?' the answer given is 'Movsēs, and his village is Dasxurēn (*Movsēs ew gelġn Dasxurēn*)'.

<sup>5</sup> *Mxit'aray Ayrivaneçwoy Patmut'iwn Hayoç*, ed. Ėmin, Moscow, 1860, pp. 23, 57.

<sup>6</sup> *Kirakosi Vardapeti Ganjakeçwoy Ĥamařōt Patmut'iwn*, ed. Venice, 1865, pp. 3-4. It is strange that Kirakos, the pupil of Vanakan who was himself the pupil of Mxit'ar Goš, does not mention the name Dasxurançi; *ibid.*, p. 98, he gives no name at all, merely referring to 'him who wrote the *History of the Ałuank'*'. Akinean, *Handēs Amsorea*, 1953, p. 17, points out that it is clear from Kirakos's list of the patriarchs of Albania which follows that of MD and does not contain later ones listed by Mxit'ar Goš (see Dowsett, *BSOAS* xxi (1958), pp. 479-80) that Kirakos did not know of Mxit'ar Goš's chronicle; manuscripts of this have come down to us from the thirteenth century (see J. Mécérian, 'Bulletin arménologique (premier cahier)', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph*.

Uxtanēs, is the first writer to call the author by his traditional name, or rather by a close form of it: 'Movsēs Kałkanduaci, historian of the Ałuank'. It is to be noted that the earliest extant manuscript of the *History*, also of the thirteenth century (1289), bears no author's name; nor do the manuscripts of Group 2. The earliest manuscript to bear the name *Movsēs Kalankatuaci* is that copied by Łunkianos in 1761.

The passage apparently responsible for the attribution to the compiler of the surname *Kalankatuaci* or *Kalankaytuaci* is that at ii. 11, p. 84 which reads: 'When the enemy became aware of what had happened, they pursued them and overtook a group of them at the foot of the mountain opposite the large village of Kałankatuk', which is in the same province of Uti where I too am from.' H. Manandean pointed out<sup>1</sup> that it would be more usual to interpret this as signifying that the writer was from the province of Uti, but not at all necessarily from Kałankatuk', and this scholar subsequently referred to a 'Moses of Uti (*Moisei Utiiskii*)'. This interpretation is sound, especially in view of the wording 'in the same province of Uti where I too am from (*i nmin yUti gawari yormē ew es*)'. The person speaking here, however, may be none other than the original writer of this particular passage which was later, in the tenth century, incorporated into the *History of the Ałuank*', and so, therefore, no more the compiler of the whole than Adrianē or Viroy, both of whom have signed themselves in the course of the *History*.<sup>2</sup> It is N. Akinean's opinion that the name *Kalankatuaci* is due to a faulty misinterpretation of the above-mentioned passage by Kirakos which misled the scribe Łunkianos<sup>3</sup> and subsequent writers. It is not even certain that the compiler's first name was Movsēs. Akinean wonders whether there was an oral tradition to this effect, but inclines more to the view that 'in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the readers of the history were interested to know who its unknown author was, they would naturally [?] have assumed that the historian of the Albanians was one of the catholicoi of the Albanians, and if so, that he must have been the last catholicos Movsēs [mentioned in iii. 23].'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. [Yakob] Manandean, *Beiträge zur albanischen Geschichte*, Leipzig, 1897, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Below, pp. 72 and 103 respectively.

<sup>3</sup> *Handēs Amsorea*, 1953, p. 28. In his alteration of iii. 23 (see p. xiv, n. 7 and p. 228, nn. 1, 2) Łunkianos must also have been influenced by Kirakos.

It is possible that the name *Kalankatuaçi* is based upon something more solid than a misinterpretation on the part of Kirakos and others. The village of Kalankaytuk' is mentioned five times in the *History*, which may suggest a special interest in it and knowledge of it on the part of the compiler; on the other hand, this village, being the seat of a noble and in Arab times a station on the main road from Partaw to Dwin, clearly had some intrinsic importance.<sup>1</sup> Since it was also the site of a monastery, it is possible, as Professor Henning suggests, that Movsēs, by birth from Dasxuran (nowhere mentioned in the *History*), was a member of this monastery and thus entitled to both *Dasxurançi* and *Kalankatuaçi* as surnames.<sup>2</sup> Of the two, however, *Dasxurançi* seems the surer.

Manandean<sup>3</sup> could see no reason to suppose that Books One and Two are to be attributed to the seventh century and Book Three to the tenth.<sup>4</sup> It has been held that Book Three is an inferior work, but it is hardly inferior to Book One. Šahnazarean's interpretation of passages at i. 8, ii. 14, 28, 33 in the first person as referring to the compiler himself<sup>5</sup> have been reduced *ad absurdum* by Manandean<sup>6</sup> and Ačārean.<sup>7</sup> As far as the quality of Book Three is concerned, Manandean pointed out that the quality of a compiler's work depends upon the quality of his sources more than upon his own skill. There are, moreover, clear links between all three Books: at iii. 10<sup>8</sup> there is a reference to i. 10, 26; at ii. 17<sup>9</sup> to i. 27; at iii. 22<sup>10</sup> to i. 15.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 80, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See *BSOAS* xxi (1958), p. 476, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Loc. cit., p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> As by Šahnazarean, op. cit., i, p. 85, followed, for example, by G. Zarbhānālean, *Haykakan hin dprut'ean patmut'iwni*, 4th ed., Venice, 1932, pp. 442 ff., and H. Hübschmann, *Armenische Grammatik*, Leipzig, 1895, p. 6; also by T. Tēr-Grigorean, 'K voprosu ob "Istorii Alvanskoi strany" Moiseya Kalankatuisкого' (an unpublished article conserved in the *Nauchnyi arkhiv Instituta istorii Akademii Nauk Azerb. SSR*, No. 991, 1939), quoted by K. V. Trever, op. cit., pp. 14-16; Tēr-Grigorean thinks that Moses was 62-67 years old in 670. I have not been able to consult Z. I. Yampol'skii's article 'K izucheniyu letopisi Kavkazkoi Albanii', *Izvestiya Ak. Nauk Azerb. SSR*, 1957, No. 9, pp. 149 ff., quoted by Trever, p. 16, n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Loc. cit., p. 83. A like interpretation of the passage in ii. 19 referring to 'my lord Juansēr' (below, p. 115) is made by Tēr-Grigorean, op. cit., quoted by Trever, p. 15. Trever herself thinks it unlikely that this phrase has been merely copied by a tenth-century compiler (ibid.).

<sup>6</sup> Loc. cit., p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Ačārean, 'Movsēs Kalankatuaçi: k'nnut'iwn anor grut'ean žamanakin veray', *Bazmavēp*, Venice, 1897, pp. 370-4.

What date is to be ascribed to the compilation known as the *History of the Atuank'*? The last date specifically mentioned in Book Two is that of Israyēl's mission to the Honk' (681-2),<sup>1</sup> but the reference at ii. 48<sup>2</sup> to the visit of the Armenian catholicos Ehia to Partaw (704), described in iii. 7-9,<sup>3</sup> adversely affects the old argument that the compiler of the second book was of the seventh century. The last dates implied in Book Three are those of Senek'erim, Albanian king of Siwnik' c. 1080-1105,<sup>4</sup> but there is such a chronological gap between these and the next latest dates implied, namely, that of the Russian raid on Partaw in 944<sup>5</sup> and that of the accession of Movsēs IV (991),<sup>6</sup> that Brosset<sup>7</sup> was tempted to consider the mention of Senek'erim a later interpolation. The fact remains, however, that the last person to have a hand in the *History of the Atuank'* wrote at the earliest at the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century. This person may have been Dasxurançi; if so, Mxit'ar Ayrivaneçi and Kirakos were mistaken in placing the compiler in the tenth century. In my own view too many words have been wasted in seeking the name and epoch of a compiler who was certainly no Bacon and no Shakespeare. One can perhaps be content to allow the sources gathered together by a person or persons unknown to speak for themselves.

<sup>1</sup> ii. 39, p. 154, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> p. 178, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> pp. 192-7.

<sup>4</sup> iii. 22, p. 227, n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> iii. 21, p. 224, n. 4.

<sup>6</sup> iii. 23, p. 231.

<sup>7</sup> *Histoire de la Siounie*, i, p. 182, n. 1.

## Movses Dasxurants'i's

### *History of the Aghuans*

#### Book One

---

[List of Abbreviations](#)

#### 11.

[Page 10]

#### Chapter 11. *The Letter from Bishop Giwt to St. Vačē, full of God's heavenly grace*<sup>1</sup>

GREETINGS. Since the innermost desire of my soul was to preach of your holy love of virtue, my mind has become full, and by the power of Heaven I am enabled to express my thoughts in words. And a great and terrible fear has fallen upon me, a fear higher than the highest heavens and lower than the nethermost hemisphere, and it has beset me from above and below, from behind and before, from right and left. I cannot flee, and I fear to sink and to drown like the apostle Peter in the bottomless sea. But if the Lord Jesus stretch forth his hand to help me, this shall embolden me, and I shall penetrate the impenetrable; for I possess the reason of mind which tells me that some spiritual substance is in the virtue of brave men who astonished the angels and who, having no written laws, became laws in themselves, and without laws, recognized God on high and understood all the things which had come to pass in accordance with His laws, and who without the guidance of

<sup>1</sup> Giwt, from Arahēz in Tayk', catholicos of Armenia c. 461-78 (Basmadjian); see LP 62-64, &c.



prophet or heavenly angel have seen God. And lo! I approach with love that which I feared, and draw nigh by hope, and am fearlessly fortified by faith, and I begin where it is meet to begin, namely, with an account of how first of all love of Christ dwelt in your forefather Urnayr who vied in heavenly zeal with Trdat, king of Armenia, and who, when he heard of the great miracles of God, the signs and wonders which were performed by St. Gregory in the land of the Armenians who straightway turned from the paths of error and in true knowledge of God threw off the burdensome yoke of the heathens and were alleviated and awakened, and spreading their wings, soared up to Heaven. Hearing of this, the brave Urnayr did not hesitate; the great king sent no messenger, but went in person accompanied by his grandees and nobles and numerous forces, arrived in Armenia and came into the presence of the king of gigantic strength. He received him in brotherly love and friendship, placed himself at his disposal, and revealed to him the inward and outward mysteries in the company of St. Gregory and the whole Armenian army. Your king humbled himself, falling down and embracing their hands and feet, and related all the errors of the heathens and confessed his own past sins committed in ignorance. St. Grigorios encouraged him with the coming of the Incarnation of the Son of God, who came to forgive and not to judge, to give life and not to bring death, and promised life to those who had passed from the earth. When your king heard all this, he and his soldiers imposed upon themselves a forty-day fast, renouncing their former blameworthy deeds. On the fiftieth day, when they had rejected Satan and all his works and confessed the Holy Trinity, the king descended into the most holy water and all his soldiers with him. And when the chief priest had performed over them the rite of rebirth in the Heavenly Trinity, all emerged accompanied by the Holy Ghost. On the same occasion there was given to them a blessed man consecrated bishop from the city of Rome (Constantinople) who had come with King Trdat. With these heavenly gifts King Urnayr came back to the land of the Albanians, and taught and confirmed them through the apostolic canons; all received the heavenly seal [of baptism] and were inscribed in the Book of Life.<sup>1</sup> The demons in the land were driven out, sacrifices and burnt offerings were abolished, error was con-

<sup>1</sup> Pl. 5, D2, 3, 4; *S i dprut'iwn kenaç*; *BM i žařangut'iwn erkniç*, *E i žařangut'iwn erknawor*. i.e. 'among those who shall inherit Heaven'.

founded and Truth exalted, the Invisible Light reigned and darkness was driven away. First fruits were dedicated to the Church, and tithes of the produce of the threshing-floor and harvest, fields and granaries,<sup>1</sup> and all domestic animals; land also was allotted to it, and all was put in proper order under your<sup>2</sup> ancestors and your<sup>3</sup> blessed grandmothers and father<sup>4</sup> down to the time of your<sup>3</sup> wonderful reign. The serpent (*višap*) which was ancient in the days of the first Man saw first the wonderful rebirth of your nature in the faith of your fathers, and then secondly there came into the mind of the malicious enemy in his arrogance the suspicion<sup>5</sup> that perhaps in the same way as Salvation came to Albania, so by this renascence Truth might enter the land of the east. He made great haste and despaired more deeply than in the days of righteous Job. He summoned and gathered together all his powers of darkness and revealed to them the evil passion which tormented him. All were terrified and trembled, and they sought a solution and came to an agreement. 'Do not worry, O brave one,' they said; 'our error is older than his truth; by means of a weak beast you vanquished the first man, can you not prevail over his children by means of this great king?' So saying, they sent the vast ocean upon you, tempestuous winds descended upon it and agitated and stirred its multitudinous waves; it began to surge and rise, and it spread and ruined the plains and the hills. And at the same time there came and fell upon you a host of heathen tribes accompanied by terrifying beasts, banners with divers emblems, loud-sounding trumpets, the blast of horns,<sup>6</sup> a forest of spears, shining swords, gold-embossed shields, and thick, strong lances. They, the material, sought to frighten you, the spiritual; the corruptible wished to destroy the incorruptible, and the godless strove to cut down your godly branch. Twice and three times they were defeated, but were not

<sup>1</sup> BM, V1, 2 *štemaranaç*; P3, E *xašanç* 'flocks'; P1, 2, 5, D1, 2, 3, 4, S *šaranaç* 'by which name the Armenians still call the fruits hung on strings and dried in the summer for consumption in the winter' (S, n. 23), 'dialect word: anything (beads, fruit) on a string, = *šark*' (Malxaseanç).

<sup>2</sup> Plural.

<sup>3</sup> Singular.

<sup>4</sup> So E, S, &c.; BM reads 'under your (sg.) ancestors and father and noble grandfathers and blessed grandmother'.

<sup>5</sup> BM *etes zčk'nax cmund bnut'ean k'oyoy ařajinn i hayreni hawatoy. erkrord i gořoz vičakēn yoyš kaskac i mit ankanēr čarasēr t'šnamoy*; S . . . *k'oyoy bnut'ean yarařin i hayreni* [from here also D1, 3] *hawatoy erkrord, or i gořoz vičakin. yoyš kaskac . . .*; E omits *erkrord i gořoz vičakin*.

<sup>6</sup> P1, 5, S, E *galarap'oł gočmamb*; BM *dalarap'it* . . .; NBHL i, p. 591 quotes

put to shame. And He who sits in highest heaven and beholds the entire world, [both those who] observe and heed good laws and those who oppose them, saw that you alone were righteous and permitted the furious furnace to encompass you. They burned, flamed, and flared like thorns in fire, but you were like the three children in the furnace; you destroyed the power of the fire, you turned the heat of the sparks to the coolness of a rose and the darkness of the smoke into the whiteness of a lily; you transformed the destructive nature of fire into creative power, and brought the Holy Ghost<sup>1</sup> to your aid from highest heaven to earth. Their wise men became dolts, their brave men cowards, their threats abated, their champions hid, their multitude decreased.

Blessed are you, and blessed are they who rallied round you. You were few in numbers and you became a numberless host; outwardly you were few, but inwardly you were countless. Your spear was the spear of Joshua and your armour that of the general of God who will descend with Him on the Day of the Resurrection. His voice will move the earth, shake the rocks, break open the graves, raise the dead, make young the old, and pass judgement [on all], placing some on the right hand and others on the left hand. This befits but God alone. To you, as a faithful and loving servant and heir to his kingdom, He has granted celestial gifts which are the symbol of the Day of Resurrection. He who gloried in evil was put down; he who boasted in his error was abashed. Everything in your army was [of] twofold [significance]. If your armour was the protector of the body, it was as much the armour of Faith; if you held a shield to protect your virtuous breast from blows, you held also the shield of Hope and Faith; if the arrow flew straight by the strength of your arm, your holy prayers and supplications reached higher than the skies to God; if your sword gleamed in your virtuous arm, the brilliance of your faith flashed like lightning among the angels; your banners were the banners of Heaven and the point of your spear shone like the silver rays of the sun.

That is what struck me with terror at the beginning of my discourse. How shall I be able to tell in words that which is beyond the power of words? My words can<sup>2</sup> tell of the material world

<sup>1</sup> P<sub>1</sub>, 5, S, E *zerrordn astucoy*, 'the third [person] of God'?; BM *zerrordn astuac* 'the third God', the reading quoted in *NBHL* from Giwt's letter and explained as 'the Trinity'.



although even this is not possible to all men but only to those who courageously strive after learning—arithmetical, geometrical, astronomical,<sup>1</sup> and medical—and then attain the heights of prophetic, apostolic, and evangelical [wisdom], the beginning and the flowering. But though I had all the arts to tell of things material, and though once you yourself were matter, now you have the likeness of things immaterial. Shall I compare you to the morning star? Your rays are brighter than the morning star's. For six months she is the morning star, and for six months the evening star, but you are every day the star of morning. The morning star appears only at the hour of dawn, but you shine day and night for twenty-four hours. And if I compare you to the moon, it will amuse the wise. In one year she aborts twelve times; she is mildewed,<sup>2</sup> sickle-shaped, hemispherical, humid, half-lit, ailing, noctambulous, dark-loving, light-shunning, penitent-like, lame, tormented by fire, forever hiding. But you are broad, tall, lucent, a bringer of good tidings, angelic of form, gladsome, encouraging, brilliant, more handsome than your fellows of the same age. I am not capable of saying how far you are superior to the sun; I will not slander him and praise you, and yet I will tell you his nature. He moves obliquely and crookedly, goes sideways, throws shadows, dwells in the south, is tormented by winter, roasts in summer, is showered upon in spring, is parched<sup>3</sup> in autumn, is swallowed by night, is born in the morning; he fades the flowers, dries up the grass, drives beasts to the shade in the middle of the day, and divides the whole day into two. Rightly did the Greeks call him Apollo!<sup>4</sup> And if you should think of his feeble brilliance, remember that he is concealed by night, hidden in clouds, darkened by dust, and agitated by storms. You have made yourself like to the sun, strengthened by the Father, encouraged by the Son, enlightened by the Holy Spirit; you are seen at night, and in the daytime the rays of your faith shine forth.

Shall I recite you an allegory? You have looked to all sides, you are more keen-sighted than the eagle and your hearing is keener

<sup>1</sup> E *astetabašxakanin*; P1, 5, D2, 3, 4, S *y-astrani* 'P'; BM om.

<sup>2</sup> D1, S *žangahoc*; P5, D2 *žanghawc*; E *žangakoc*; P1 *žangaharaç* (?); BM *ang, hewc* 'unhealthy, thin'.

<sup>3</sup> BM *eraštut*; P5, D1, S, E *ašnut* 'P'

<sup>4</sup> This reference to the explanation of Ἀπόλλων by ἀπόλλυμι, as indeed the general style and tone of the whole composition, shows the 'letter of Giwt' to be

than that of timid beasts.<sup>1</sup> You have seen not only the earth, but the Great One of heaven. You have abandoned the temporary and assumed the eternal. You have renounced the gilded kingship, and behold! there is in store for you the crown which no hand has wrought and which you shall receive from the holy hands of Christ. 'He who for the sake of the gospel abandons father, mother, sisters and brothers and all his possessions shall receive an hundredfold here and everlasting life in the kingdom which passes not away' [Matt. xix. 29]. It is easier for a poor man to do this, but for a man who is a king like you it is impossible; should any man do what you have done, it would be found incredible by men, amazing by angels, and comprehensible<sup>2</sup> only to God, who left the numberless hosts of angels to come in the mean shape of a man. Your feat is comparable to this. He became the Life and Salvation of the entire world, while you have thrown open the gate of salvation for the whole world and your native land. The Faith was preserved, churches flourished, martyrs' chapels were unmolested, priests remained in their priesthoods, offerings on their altars, prophets in their lections, apostles in their comforting, psalmists in their blessing, virgins in their virginity, monks in their chastity, and everyone in his station. The fame of your virtue has spread from the east to Cadiz, from the south to the north. Your martyr's name is written on a golden tablet in the Book of Life in Heaven, together with those of the apostles, protomartyrs, patriarchs, and bishops. Be watchful, O wondrous one, who have become worthy of such great things and have risen to such great heights. Remain firmly anchored to Hope and inseparable from Charity; be steadfast in the True Faith, so that the Dragon of Death may not sweep his tail over our lives. For whilst you were still a child you vanquished him, and now you are a grown man, I know that you trample underfoot all his evil schemes. My mind loves you so much that if I wrote it down in words, I should expend much parchment. Many times have I come to you on account of your love, and now by my own intercession and that of the whole holy body of the church I commend you to the Holy Ghost. The Lord be with you. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> A3043, P1, D4, S *handratanaç*; A1087, D1 *handratanaç*; A1531, A2646, A2866, P2, 3, 5, Ant, Moscow 47, E *handartanaç*; A2561, E1725, BM, P4, V1, 2, A2866 margin, P2 margin *handart anasnoç*. See Introduction, p. xi. The last reading means 'of quiet animals' presumably deer, &c., as contrasted with the bird of prey; the other readings are obscure.

<sup>2</sup> P1 S *imanali*; P2 RM E *imanali* 'comprehensible'

Martyr of Christ, sharer in the sufferings on the Cross, clothed by angels in glorious raiments, Vaçë, my pure child, king of Albania! O Lord of this world, I, Bishop Giwt, cannot in my shameful sloth<sup>1</sup> presume to address words of comfort to you, victor in your unseen battle, who received encouragement not from men, but summoned to your aid the most terrible power of Christ, and excelled and were exalted above the whole world. And now, convincing you of your fortitude, I pray that you may find my salutations pleasant and sweet. Though rejoicing in your ascent, O warrior of Christ, I have no knowledge in the poorness of my formation and preparation, for no matter devised by my wisdom would be sufficient to weave a garment of praise befitting your nobility. And if all the wise rhetoricians of Greece assembled together, they would be unable to pronounce a fitting eulogy on your spiritual victory. For you have known God, and loving Him with all your heart and soul and strength, you exchanged all your possessions and honours for the one Lord of all. By making your peace with him, you acquired not merely the earth, but the wide heavens themselves. You renounced the burnt offerings of idolatrous heathens and were made fragrant in Christ, and the fame thereof spread to the west and gladdened the souls of all men. You abandoned earthly grandeur, which engenders sin, and inherited righteousness and heavenly greatness; you forsook the pleasures<sup>2</sup> of this world and drew near to Christ, who is the haven of peace. Marshalling my words, I shall sum up thus: you were a man, and have become an angel; on earth you had kinsmen, and now in Heaven you are the brother of Christ; you were mortal and have become immortal, for you have the freedom in Christ which gives life to the mortal; you are beloved of the angels, yearned for by mankind and sought by me who remain far behind for not having been your companion in the unseen battle with wicked Satan. I do not ask you, I beg you not to be offended and to forget my remissness. Dispel my sorrow with a letter bearing your greetings. You shared the torments of Christ; be like Him in all things, for He prayed that the sins of those who placed Him upon the Cross might not be remembered; therefore how much more does it befit you to for-

<sup>1</sup> Obscure. S *Giwtay episkoposi Tër erkri, yamōt'aliç helgut'enē* . . .; BM *Giwt eps. teramb erkris yamōt'aliç i helgut'enē*; E *Giwt episkopos, i Tër berkreac* 'Giwt bishop, rejoiced in the Lord'.

give my remissness? For He who made you whole in spirit and healthy in body, He who made you worthy of adoption by Him, He shall grant that we see you with healthy soul and body in the world and enjoy your gracious and virtuous ways. Being whole in Christ, you will be busy among us for a long time, filled with love of Christ. Amen.

## Movses Dasxurants'i's

### *History of the Aghuans*

#### Book One

---

##### [List of Abbreviations](#)

#### 24.

[Page 48]

#### Chapter 24. *King Vačagan's question to the learned priest Matt'ē*

THE king asks 'whether souls, departed from the body, are sentient or insentient,<sup>2</sup> and how the living can help the dead'.

Answer: by calling on God in fasts and prayers or by other commemorations in their name. David, for example, when he put on the armour of Saul, began to stagger and stumble, but when he discarded the heavy armour, he was relieved and became himself again; in the same way souls, while still clad in the armour of the body, are weighed down, but when they put it off they become, as we have said, keen-sighted, intelligent, and more sensitive. We oppose those who have asserted that the soul becomes insentient after it has left the body by the testimony of holy writ, which says:

<sup>1</sup> See N. Pigulevskaya, *Goroda Irana v rannem srednevekov'e*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1956, pp. 202-6.

<sup>2</sup> *zgayun . . . t'ē ansgay.*

'Moses, my servant, had died and now Moses stands, not clothed in the body, but in wonderful glory before God'; therefore Peter asked the Lord for a dwelling there. If the soul of the Prophet were, as you say, insentient after it had left his body, how did it acquire sensibility and speak in such fair shape with the Son of God? 'I am the God of the living and not of the dead', He says [Matt. xxii. 32]. Is not a dead body insentient? it is therefore evident that an insentient soul is dead. Again: 'I shall defend your city for my own sake and for the sake of David my servant' [2 Kings xx. 6]. Tell me, what honour would it be for a soul with no feeling that his son become governor? On account of the living soul of the prophet, he granted him a favour in governing the city and saving it from the sword of the enemy. The apostle Paul says: 'I think it better to be absent from the body and present with Christ' [2 Cor. v. 8]. The same redeeming Word says to His Father: 'I want those whom you gave me to be with me and to behold my glory' [John xvii. 24]. Now, in accordance with what you assert, how can an unfeeling soul be with the Lord or behold His ineffable glory? Or how can the soul of the dead rich man see with keen eyes, far from the place of torment, Abraham and Lazarus, or know whence he was [Luke xvi. 23, 27]? The word of the Saviour, like a true parable, clearly shows that the soul, outside the body, becomes more keen-sighted and intelligent than it was inside the body; not only the souls of holy and righteous men, but those of sinners feel and are full of knowledge, just as the rich man became so sharp-eyed that he was able to recognize Abraham across the great gulf that lay between them. And true belief in the descent of God into Hell in order to redeem them teaches us that souls released from the body are certainly sentient and more wise. Those who commemorate the saints honour them with gifts and pray to their souls and through them beseech mercy from munificent God. And truly the souls of the saints are able to intercede and God straightway receives their prayers and grants the remission of sins.

Chapter 25. *A letter from the blessed Abraham, bishop of the Mamikoneans, to Vaçagan, king of Albania, concerning the dead*

CONSIDER, beloved one, that whether I speak in wisdom or

ignorance about the souls of the dead, there is none so ignorant [in such matters] as those who are not yet dead. God, however, is the receiver of our offerings and the keeper of covenants, and He alleviates the sins of the souls of those who died in hope. The Holy Book teaches us how Elisha, not hearing of the death of a child but hearkening to the entreaties of its mother, resuscitated the child and returned it to its mother; and the Lord our God, taking mercy upon the widow, raised her only child [2 Kings iv. 34]; and the apostles, heeding the tears and groans of the widows, raised up Tabitha and gave her back to them [Acts ix. 40]. Now, if the prayers of relations can bring one back to life from death, then the power of God is very great; therefore let us who, living, ask for remission of their sins through God's forgiveness, trust that they who die in hope shall receive remission of their sins.

**This material, which is presented solely for non-commercial educational/research purposes, appears in C. J. F. Dowsett's *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movses Dasxuranc'i* (London, 1961), pp. 72-75.**

---

**Movses Dasxurants'i's**

***History of the Aghuans***

**Book Two**

---

[List of Abbreviations](#)

**7-8.**



hastened with this most precious gift to the patriarch Abas who, greatly pleased therewith, celebrated a feast in commemoration of the coming of the saints and placed them in most pure caskets.

I, Adrianē, who wrote this colophon, pray that my readers will remember my unworthy self and will not forget the patriarch Abas in whose days the Light shone forth in the world. Wherefore may God in His great mercy remember also Vehik their guide, and to you who remember us may Christ give your reward for the sake of the blessed martyrs, now and for ever, amen.

Chapter 7. *The letter from Yovhannēs, catholicos of Armenia,<sup>1</sup> to Tēr Abas, catholicos of Albania, concerning the confirmation of the Faith*

GREETINGS and blessings to my good, true, godly, and beloved brother and colleague the Lord Abas, catholicos of Albania, and to Movsēs, bishop of Baxalat, Grigor, bishop of Kapalak, Hromik, bishop of Amaras, Timot'ē, bishop of Balasakan, Ambakum, bishop of Šak'ē, Yovhanik, bishop of Gardman, and Lewond, bishop of Mec Kolmank', from Yovhannēs, catholicos of Armenia, Abraham, bishop of Tarōn, Grigor, bishop of the *mardpet*,<sup>2</sup> Step'annos, bishop of Tayk', Maštoç, bishop of the Xorxorunik', Giwt, bishop of Vanand, Abdišoy, bishop of Asorestan, Pap, bishop of the Amatunik', K'ristap'or, bishop of the Rštunik', Sekundos, bishop of Mekk', and all the other bishops of Armenia.

We have heard a terrible rumour to the effect that certain ravening wolves in sheep's clothing have entered your country from the monastery of the filthy Peter, called the lovers of the poor but men who are by their deeds haters of Christ and renunciate the Holy Trinity, men who sow the evil tares of the accursed Nestorius and the council of Chalcedon without restraint in the souls of the innocent, perverting them from the orthodox faith into eternal perdition. Learning of the incurable afflictions which have broken out to the detriment of both body and soul, we hasten with the utmost urgency to stand by you, and write to recall to you the words of the holy apostle exhorting you to watch over yourselves and the flock of which the Holy Spirit made you the guardians and

<sup>1</sup> Yovhannēs II, 557-74.

<sup>2</sup> On this office, see Adontz, [*Justinian*], p. 470, &c.

teachers, and to remind you to maintain firmly the orthodox faith which our fathers received from the holy writ of the Old and New Testaments through St. Gregory and the thrice-blessed councils of the 318 in Nicaea, the 150 in Constantinople, and the 200 in Ephesus,<sup>1</sup> with all of whom we agreed and from whom we inherited the orthodox faith, that is, the faith of all the churches of Christ God. We confess one God, the Almighty Father, creator of all things, and the one Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, begotten of the Father, very God of very God, by whom all things [were made], and in the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father, worshipped and glorified with the Father and Son, the Holy Trinity, associates in creation and equal, of one perfect nature, watching with power and glory over all things which are. And finally the eternal Word of God, being God, became perfect and unchanged Man, born incarnate of the Holy Virgin, neither separated from his nature nor parted from his fleshliness, but remaining I AM, the same immutable God incarnate not partially, but wholly, not a duality, but an indivisible unity. It was not the Father who became incarnate, but the Son; it was not the Holy Spirit which became solid flesh, but the Only-begotten of the Father, although this came to pass through the will of the Father and the power of the Holy Spirit; but by substance (*goyut'iwon—ὁὐσία*) only the Word God. Thus is the Holy Nativity understood: the Infinite itself was wrapped in swaddling clothes that we might clad ourselves in incorruptibility; He was laid in a manger that we might lay aside our bestiality; He was glorified by the angels that we might sing with them; He received gifts from the Magi that we might cause the Faith to bear fruit; He was fed with milk that we might acquire freedom from sin; He grew perfect in body that we might achieve the perfection of Christ; He submitted voluntarily to torments that we might be saved from the torments of sin; He was crucified that we might be worthy of the fruit of Life; He died that by His death Death too might die; He was laid in the tomb that he might shatter the locks of Hell; He rose on the third day that He might lead us to life; He ascended into Heaven and sat on the right hand of the Father that

<sup>1</sup> P1, 2, 3, 5, S, E add. *jumlay okē surb hayrapetk* 'a total of 668 holy patriarchs'; BM, P4 om. HAG 516, considers *jumlay* (Ar. *djumla*) to be probably the oldest extant Arabic loan-word in Armenian. The word cannot have been contained in any letter from Yovhannēs II to Abas, both sixth-century patriarchs, and its absence from BM and P4 suggests that its presence in manuscripts of Group 1 is due to the accountancy of a scribe rather than MD himself.

we also might be ranged on the right hand; He will come again to judge the quick and the dead, and there is no end to His kingdom.

Therefore we say in faith and praise: Holy God, holy and powerful, holy, and immortal, who wert crucified for us, have mercy upon us. Those who did not confess thus were cursed by the holy fathers just as we curse all the ancient and modern heretics: namely, Paul of Samosata, Mani, Marcion, the filthy Nestorius, Theodoret, the evil and vain Council of Chalcedon, and the Jewish letter of Leo which impudently presumed to attribute two natures (*bnut'iwn*) and two persons (*dēm*) to the one Christ God and to assert that the Holy Virgin did not give birth to God, but to a mere man like ourselves, a temple of the Word of God.

There are others who affirm that while the Lord Christ was on earth, He was not in heaven, and that while He was on the cross, He was not on the throne of glory, and that while He was in the tomb, He was not at the right hand of the Father. God curses those who think thus, and we curse all who believe and accept it.

We have sent you the priest Matt'eōs, a trustworthy member of our clergy, to deliver this letter. We remind you of the words of John the Evangelist, who says that 'if any should come to you and does not accept the teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ, do not receive him into your house, and address no words of greeting to him; if any should greet such a one, he is an accomplice to his evil deeds, for whosoever does not confess that the Lord Jesus came in the flesh, he is the deceptive Antichrist' [2 John x. 11 and 1 John iv. 3]. Drive such as they from your borders, and do not listen to their deadly teaching. Since your fathers were of the same faith as our fathers, and you are of the same faith as we, we should be pleased if three or more of your bishops would come and learn about the true doctrine from us, so that none of the shepherds might perish and the flock be lost, but that the angels in heaven and we servants and worshippers of Christ God on earth might rejoice in your discovering what is good. Greetings in the Lord.

Chapter 8. *The expulsion from Albania of the heretics whom Lord Abas, catholicos of Albania, exiled on receipt of the above letter*

PROPAGATED amid bitter quarrels, the vain and worthless hereti-

cal confusion of the Council of Chalcedon spread throughout the world, and owing to the tolerance of God their false teaching grew stronger, and the souls of many who were tainted by its facile proposition entered the eternal darkness of perdition. These tares took root also in this land of Albania, and Lord Abas, catholicos of Albania, together with his bishops named in the above letter, made a thorough inquiry and drove the filthy doctors of the sect from Albania; the hypocrite Thomas the psalmist Elia, Bnotn, Ibas, and others like them were exiled to distant lands. Thus was peace established among the clergy through the mercy of Almighty God. Worldly battles, however, greatly increased.

## Movses Dasxurants'i's

### *History of the Aghuans*

#### Book Two

---

##### [List of Abbreviations](#)

30-31.

[Page 134]

Chapter 30. *The text of the letter written by the bishops Dawit' and Yovēl and the great assembly concerning the way in which God revealed his great wonders*

‘UXTANĒS,<sup>1</sup> godly archbishop of the east, filled with celestial and spiritual love and endowed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and Ĵuanšēr, provident, noble, ever-illustrious and powerful ex-consul and patrician, and all the *naxarars* who are with you, we, the humble bishops Dawit' and Yovēl, greet you in the Lord.

‘We must proclaim the good news and relate to you in this letter the miraculous reappearance of hidden things and the discovery of the Holy Cross which greatly increased the abundant wonderment in our minds concerning things which, with doubting and disbelieving minds, we once declined even to mention. But lo, we have now ourselves witnessed the eternal miracle of the discovery of the cross, and of necessity we now truthfully bear witness that it is the glory of glories; how is it possible to pass over this in silence, to hide a shining image under a bushel? It is evident that it

<sup>1</sup> Catholicos of Albania, 670–82; see below, iii. 23, p. 229, and Dowsett, ‘The Albanian Chronicle of Mxit'ar Goš', *BSOAS* xxi (1958), p. 478, n. 3.

must be worthily proclaimed from the ranks of this beacon of light, that is, by this holy, illuminating convocation. Consequently we must judiciously proclaim the agent of our salvation, the fair and seemly four-armed [cross] of Our Lord, [given] that we might ourselves accept the fact of His incomparable first bearing thereof. It is in truth the very hope of Christians, [the symbol of] the resurrection of the dead, a guide for the blind; for the cross, which was formerly synonymous with condemnation, has become the agent of salvation for believers. Through it we have found ourselves within the royal bed-chamber; we fear no flaming arrows, for we wear the emblem of the king. Lend an attentive ear to our words.

'We were not disposed to examine this matter of our own accord, above all because we in our doubting minds considered the whole affair a fraud, but being unable to contravene your commands, [we did so]; and having examined it properly, by the grace of God we discovered the truth of it upon arriving on the bank of a river in a place called Čłax in a valley in Arçax where a shrine stood. And lo, the news of our arrival spread, and a multitude of people from the surrounding countryside came and gathered there, including various orders of clergy and other honourable men who displayed no small measure of contradiction and opposition. We observed strict fasts for three days, however, each one of us keeping to the rules and praying constantly, and then we began to dig near the altar. Suddenly a sweet, pungent smell of perfume filled our senses, by means of which, after a little labour, we found that which we desired through the grace of the Most High and the prayers of the holy father Israyēl: two silver caskets with a leaden seal fastened with a Greek device<sup>1</sup> and upon which a tablet of pure gold was securely riveted; and there was a Syriac and Armenian inscription upon it. In accordance with the inscription, we opened them in the presence of the holy priests and discovered relics of the all-quickenings cross and many other sacred objects which the inscription said to be Jerusalem relics of things sacred to the Lord. I also, Yovēl, humble bishop, gave thanks with them to the giver of all things and dispelled all doubt from my mind, and accepted in faith the vision of the abbot. Since this discovery took place in my diocese, I had one of the caskets taken to my own church amid great rejoicing, while we, the bishops Dawit' and Yovēl, by the grace of God sent the other holy things with the chorepiscopi

<sup>1</sup> ? *hořomap'ak*.



and priests and a suite of servants to the abbot's monastery, accompanied by happy and joyous spiritual song. May the Lord God preserve you by his power and glory and through the discovery of the cross which bore God all the long and peaceful days of your lives, and give an incomparable [abundance] of the dew of heaven and the riches of the earth to the spiritual overseer [Uxtanēs] and bless the exalted leader Ĵuanšēr with royal heirs.'

Chapter 31. *The reply from the patriarch and the prince to the bishops*

'WE have read the letter written by you and for which we offered great praises to our bountiful God who day by day in his mercy performs miracles for his creatures, as also for the gift of your own holiness, bishops Dawit' and Yovēl. Uxtanēs, unworthy patriarch, and Ĵuanšēr, general and prince of Albania, bid you rejoice in the Lord.

'We have given eternal thanks for the quickening salvation given to us by God, for the gifts of God and for the Holy Cross which has appeared among us and opened and given light to our eyes; for this we with ever-open mouth and never-resting tongue have blessed our Lord Jesus Christ, the beneficent and bountiful worker of miracles, who has given us the incorruptible gifts of the Holy Spirit. Consider us, though far away in the body, yet near in the spirit, and remember us before the newly-discovered cross. Take Israyēl, clothed in virtue and weaned in holiness, and the gifts of treasure and the cross, and bring them to us with great care, that we also may worship them in joyous communion with the entire congregation. Greetings in the Lord.'

The blessed supervisor and overseer of the bishops, reading the letter from the general of the east and the holy catholicos, took with all speed the holy treasures which they had found and together with the bishops and Israyēl arrived without delay at the great city of Peroz-Kawat, for there sat the great prince of the east Ĵuanšēr and the archbishop Uxtanēs together with all the naxarars, who, upon receiving the radiant gift from the exalted assembly, worshipped long in the crowded hall. And the prince dedicated votive offerings and gifts before the holy cross and praising the abbot, honoured him with the catholicos and the

whole assembly. Then he commanded him to be sent with the casket containing the cross to his monastery Glxoy Vank' on the high mountain in the upper part of the canton of Mec Kueank'. And saluting the blessed man with a spiritual embrace, everyone returned home with happy thoughts.



## Movses Dasxurants'i's

### *History of the Aghuans*

#### Book Two

---

##### [List of Abbreviations](#)

### 35.

[Page 145]

#### Chapter 35. *The elegy on the death of the great prince Ջuanšēr<sup>2</sup>*

[Ayb] Inventive spirit of the word of God, compose with wisdom<sup>3</sup>  
this melancholy<sup>4</sup> song, that with mournful voice we may for  
ever lament our bitter loss.

[Ben] Great ruin overtook our eastern land and the noises of  
destruction echoed through the earth; may all nations and  
peoples hear my words and all creatures born on earth lament  
with me.

[Gim] The living rock and strong has overturned, the wall of  
strength is dashed down, the tower of reason overthrown, the  
bulwark of prosperity split and fallen asunder.

<sup>1</sup> If we believe the details given by MD, Ջuanšēr's death took place before the raid of Alp Ilit'uēr between 9 June and 23 December 681 (below, p. 150, n. 3), and presumably after September 680.

<sup>2</sup> The earliest secular poem (apart from fragments of oral literature preserved in MX, &c.) in Armenian literature. The acrostic was also the form chosen by the seventh-century catholicos Komitas in his hymn on St. Hrip'simē and her companions (see A. Baumstark, *Die christlichen Literaturen des Orients*, iii (Leipzig, 1911), p. 96; M. Abelean [*Istoriya drevne-armyanskoi literatury*], i (Erevan, 1948), p. 311). The text of the poem is also contained in the journal *Noyean Alavani*, Constantinople, No. 37 (1852), the readings of which will be indicated below by NA.

<sup>3</sup> P<sub>1</sub>, 5, D<sub>1</sub>, S *imastiw*; P<sub>4</sub>, BM, Q, D<sub>2</sub>, Ant. *imasti*; E *imasts i*.

<sup>4</sup> P<sub>1</sub>, 4, 5, D<sub>1</sub>, BM, Q, S, NA *txakan*; D<sub>2</sub>, 3, E *tirakan* 'pertaining to the lord'.

- [Da] Our peace has turned to bitterness and the gates of the marauders shall pour them forth upon us, for his wonderful reign has been destroyed and the light of his miraculous rule has died.
- [Eċ] The curses with which the prophet Isaiah threatened us long ago have come and fallen upon us, for on the day of the Feast of the Lord's Cross we were reduced to sorrow and bitter weeping.
- [Za] They dug a pit of utter perdition to trap the good shepherd; the spirit of error breathed within them and they concealed the snare of death.
- [Ē] He sat like a lion in his lair, and silent his enemies trembled before him; the lords of noble families and all the princes obeyed him in fear and love.
- [Et'] His fame spread over the whole earth and his glory extended to the ends of the world; the whole universe lauded and acclaimed the power of his intellect and the wisdom of his judgement.
- [T'o] The king of the Greeks and the prince of the south eagerly sought to behold our lord; receiving him with respectful salutations and crowning him in glory, they greatly honoured him.
- [Žē] The hour of our misfortunes suddenly came upon us and chastized our impenitent corruption; we angered the Creator by our deeds, and He plunged the supreme power [of the land]<sup>1</sup> into perdition.
- [Ini] His protectors abandoned him and help from above departed from him; for the Lord withdrew on the evil day and left him to be trampled underfoot by wicked men.<sup>2</sup>
- [Liwn] The diabolical enemy bent his bow and whetted his cunning dissimulation of love as though it were a sword; wounding him grievously, he brought destruction upon him by night, as formerly it came upon the tribe of Moab.
- [Xē] On a deceitful pretext he parted from him, and then, with merciless blows, he wounded the noble man; (thou wert proud

<sup>1</sup> P<sub>1</sub>, 5, D<sub>1</sub>, S, E, NA *znaxagah tērut'iwon*; P<sub>4</sub>, BM, Q *znaxagahut'iwon teatinn mer* 'the sovereignty of our lord'.

<sup>2</sup> P<sub>1</sub>, S, E, NA *et'ol zna koxan šantiç*; P<sub>4</sub>, 5, BM, Q . . . *i koxumm šandiç*.

above the nations of the world and wounded deeply those who roused thee, but now the sun hath taken another path, and the sons of thy slaves have rushed brazenly upon thee).<sup>1</sup>

[Ca] The child of evil who sinned against him, the son of lawlessness who ill-used him—may he walk the earth weighed down with maledictions, may he roam and wander in uncertainty like Cain!

[Ken] May twigs entangle him as he flees, birds of the skies crowd in flight above him, crows of the valleys fly at him and wild beasts lie in wait for him!

[Ho] May the fire of Herod be sent against him, worms and rats breed on him, grievous burns inflame him and devour the body of this regicide!

[Ja] May the hand which was raised to kill<sup>2</sup> his master and the feet which trampled on his splendid countenance be shrivelled by a virulent leprosy, and may ringworms break out upon him in cankerous<sup>3</sup> sores.

[Łat] May he hide and rest in the shade of briars, may broods of serpents offend him, may the venom of aspicks spread through his body and burst him with excessive swellings.

[Čē] He was the torch of true peace for us; the valiant Ĵuanšēr was our pilot, the tamer of the fury of the waves who quelled all risings of those who sought to enslave us.<sup>4</sup>

[Men] Strung with pearls were the words of his mouth, and his life shone with virtue.

[Yi] He would rise from his slumbers like a lion-cub, and going forth at dawn would carry away and distribute the choice morsels of sheep.<sup>5</sup>

[Nu] He would sleep in the body while with waking soul he drove the chariot of Mars among the stars, bravely bearing off the flower of wisdom.

[Ša] The graces of devotion [flow] abundantly in drops from the side of Jesus; his bosom, broad as the ocean, breathes through

<sup>1</sup> P<sub>1</sub>, D<sub>1</sub>, S; P<sub>4</sub>, 5, BM, Q, Ant, E, NA om.

<sup>2</sup> P<sub>1</sub>, 5, S, E i *spananel*; BM, Q *yapakanel*, P<sub>4</sub> *apakanel* 'destroy'.

<sup>3</sup> P<sub>1</sub>, 5, S, E *čarakeš*; P<sub>4</sub>, BM, Q, Ant. *čaraget* 'ugly'.

<sup>4</sup> Here the poem ends in D<sub>1</sub>, 2, BM, Q, Ant., E, P<sub>2</sub>-5; it continues in P<sub>1</sub>, S, NA. Ališan, *Hayapatum, Patmut'iwon Hayoç*, Venice, 1901, 8°, vol. 1, p. 541, n. 2, considers the following verses to be a much inferior continuation. At this point D<sub>2</sub> adds 'Remember in Christ the scribe Ĵunkianos, O good readers'.

<sup>5</sup> P<sub>1</sub>, S *zbit' aks oçxaraç*; S 1 var., NA . . . *nšxaraç* 'pieces, remains'.

his sweet and pleasing nostrils the perfume of immortality,  
symbol of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

[O] My elegy is not upon immortal nymphs or ostrich flocks, but  
is a bitter lament for a multitude of sons, for you bereft ones  
left behind, for a deserted town.

[Ča] May not the bitter days of thy painful death be counted  
among the years of time; may he who so ill-used thee wither  
in adversity.

[Pē] For us thy shining sun was a light that never failed; alas! that  
night and gloomy darkness and a lightless body cut off thy  
countenance from us and cast a shadow, never to be dispersed,  
over us thy people.

[Ĵē] I burn with anger, I am consumed with grief, when I behold  
thy exalted throne bereft of thee.

[Ra] Thy feet walked in the path of consolation, wherefore my eyes,  
painful and sore, stream like fountains of tears.

[Sē] The ones thou lovedst burn with love of thee and recall thy  
never-to-be-forgotten love; O that we were sweet-scented  
incense and might perfume thy tomb!

[Vew] Our crown has vanished, our throne has gone, and our  
glory and splendour are buried with thee.

[Tiwn] The shores of Lake Tiberias and the mountains of Lebanon  
prospered through thee; at the sight of the serpents of  
the north wind they called for thee, and when thou didst not  
appear, Huns with their axes felled the pomegranate trees.

[Rē] Hosts of kings are clothed in mourning for thee; the veils of  
brides are covered thick with dust.

[Čo] They grieve and grieve and bitterly weep.

[Hiwn] They lament and sit alone, like birds whose chicks have  
died.

[P'iwr] They hasten to cast away their robes, despising glory;  
through thee we learned again the vanity of fame and how  
none may remain on earth.

[K'ē] It would be sweet to speak of other things, for sad it is to  
lament, but sweetest of all would be to die with thee!

<sup>1</sup> This passage is obscure. P<sub>1</sub>, S *šnorhk' astuacpaštut' ean yordahos faržmamb i kaylakac količn Yisusi. coç covasaras xHogwoym ařak eleal* (S 1 var., NA *ařayka-yeal*) *yamušičn* (NA, P<sub>1</sub> *zanušičn*) *artahosēr yaxoržaçn hototeleac zhot anmahut' ean*.

This material, which is presented solely for non-commercial educational/research purposes, appears in C. J. F. Dowsett's *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movses Dasxuranc'i* (London, 1961), pp. 157-159.

---

**Movses Dasxurants'i's**

***History of the Aghuans***

**Book Two**

---

[List of Abbreviations](#)

**40.**

[Page 157] ...

saying: 'Children, be converted, and acknowledge the Lord God that He may have mercy upon you and give you life, for He alone is the Lord and creator of all things. Abandon henceforth your worship of abominations, do not worship created things, for all that is of Satan and destroys the soul. No one can serve two masters. No one can drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of the devils; there is no means of eating at the table of the Lord and the table of the devils. May God not remember your sins deliberate or unintentional, but may He rather cast you into the furnace of knowledge and into the chastisement of righteousness; He who illuminated the whole universe in the font of God, dispelled the mist and darkness from benighted heathen peoples and shone upon them the light of the truth of faith, will also illuminate you by his most radiant grace if you place yourselves before Him with undoubting minds, and firmly and lovingly rooted in the glory of the Son of God acknowledge and believe in the Holy Trinity. For the incorporeal warriors also shout with a holy, threefold voice: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, the whole world is filled with His glory!" You see the power of three persons (*anjnaworut'iwonk'*) and one godhead, as the holy apostles and the martyr Gregory first handed on to us: the Father from Himself (*yanjnē*), the Son from the Father, and the Holy Spirit from their being (*ēut'iwon*). The whole earth is full of His glory. That is the teaching of the gospel in accordance with the words of the Saviour, a testimony unto all heathens which was fulfilled and spread over the universe; as the Psalm says: "their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" [Ps. xviii. 5 = A.V. xix. 4]; and another prophet says: "the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the many waters which cover the seas" [Isa. xi. 9]. And behold, we see today that the teaching of the word of God is presented to you and impressed upon you and is sown and bears fruit in the field of your heart where in the hands of skilled husbandmen it yields abundant fruit, an hundredfold, sixtyfold, and thirtyfold. Now with such abundance within you, what compels you to allow the bird of death to approach the pure and flowery meadows of your soul? Know you not that our first father Adam was driven out of Paradise for this and inherited the thorny,

thistle-bearing earth? To this the apostle testifies [cf. Rom. i. 21 ff., and v. 1 ff.]. The lawless prince, desiring to become a god, stretched forth his hand and bound all men in sin; growing envious of the honour of the first created man, he incited him to perverse vices and led him into the snares of corruption, murder, and all crimes, and he and all his family became father to the seed of tribulation and curses. As is also said in Genesis: "Lamech took unto him two wives" [iv. 19]; and Jubal, son of Lamech, fashioned lyres for songs, and trumpets and harps and drums and all artificial sounds, ~~which are the fashioners of idolatry and the inciters of lechery.~~ Nebuchadnezzar also commissioned these ~~metal voices~~ and foolishly summoned [his people] to the idolatrous worship of a huge golden image, to which he set up an altar and for which a service of dedication was held in public. Do you see then the infinite wickedness of the diabolical race of Cain? For as murder is of Satan, so is the taking of two wives, and the fabrication of harmonious songs is of the same tempter. Instead of promises of good things, God poured down upon those who, given to adultery and the extravagant designs of the race of Seth, fornicated with the daughters of malediction a scourging torrent of rain and universal destruction. Noah, because he alone of that race was found to be a just man from a righteous house, was saved by his faith and holiness at God's command from the chastizing flood together with his family. Thus precious and valuable is faith and holiness. Lo, Canaan was cursed on account of the mocking effrontery of Ham, as one reads in the story: "Cursed be the boy Canaan; he shall be a servant unto his brethren" [Gen. ix. 25]. We see that from his race arose the giant Nimrod who by his legendary sorcery beguiled all nations into heaping up stones to build a tower. He himself, puffed up on account of his powerful build and gigantic size, ruled over all; as it is written: "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel" [Gen. x. 10]. After the destruction of the man-made tower and the confusion of tongues, Nimrod, as we have learned from certain historical chronicles, likening himself to the gods, grew so proud and haughty that he commissioned sculptors to carve a gilded image from silver and brass and gave it his name. Many of these erring nations offered sacrifices to that idol, just as now we see you err hither and thither in untrodden paths in senseless and superstitious battles owing to the ~~trickery of spell-binding~~ sorcerers and geomancing wizards. And to some Aspandiat, a savage giant, you



sacrifice burnt horses, and do not stop to consider how the lover of impure things could be pure; for as those sacrifices are filthy and unclean, so all those who bring offerings to Aspandiat are abominable and filthy in the eyes of God; as it is written: "Every wicked man is abominable to the Lord, and has no intercourse with the just" [Prov. iii. 32]. Similarly, you invoke as a god the ethereal lightning flash which flares from the sound of thunder and call it a saviour. Why can you not understand, you sorry thinkers, why the flashes of lightning and rolls of thunder in the clouds cease during the six months of severe winter frosts? Is it not because the lightning flashes at the nod of God our Creator and ceases at his behest, and dares not appear in the wintertime? It is evident from this that they are not gods, but creatures of God the Creator. You have erred greatly in disregarding the text which says that "gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth" [Jer. x. 11]. Know and see that God is alone in His authority and that above Him there is no one; He is the Creator of all things visible and invisible, God the only-begotten Son, begotten of the Father, and the Holy Spirit, of their nature, whereby the world also came into being.

'Cast henceforth your old errors away, renew your hearts and choose what is good, for Jesus Christ came to the world to save sinners; come and turn to Him through repentance. Do not worship the sun and the moon, but worship God who made the sun and the moon and the sea and everything in them; for those who worship the sun and the moon shall inherit unquenchable fire, and those who sacrifice to the waters shall sink like rocks in abundant waters. ~~As for those who worship~~ leafy trees and bring them offerings, the holy scriptures have this to say of them: "the fire shall burn all the wood of the field, and shall consume all the ungodly and shall not go out". And about those who have attached to their persons golden or silver images of the *višap* serpent<sup>1</sup> it is written: "their silver and gold shall not save them in the day of the wrath of the Lord, who alone is able to lift the heavy burdens of torment and hell eternal from disobedient sinners who may be as ungodly as heathens".'

This and more did the great chief-priest Israyēl say.

<sup>1</sup> See refs. in Dowsett, *BSOAS* xix (1957), p. 468, n. 2, to which may be added A. S. Mnacakanian, *Haykakan zardarvest* (*Armianskoe ornamental'noe iskusstvo*), Erevan, 1955, pp. 547-57.



This material, which is presented solely for non-commercial educational/research purposes, appears in C. J. F. Dowsett's *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movses Dasxuranc'i* (London, 1961), pp. 171-181.

---

**Movses Dasxurants'i's**

***History of the Aghuans***

**Book Two**

---

[List of Abbreviations](#)

[Page 171] ...

46.

Chapter 46. *The question asked by Dawit', bishop of Mec Kotmank', of Yovhann Mayrogomeci,<sup>1</sup> concerning images and pictures*

IN the days when Lord Uxtanēs, and after him Eliazar, directed the patriarchate of Albania, the land of Albania remained unaffected by the confusion and heresy which arose among both learned and ignorant men in many places and the disputes and quarrels which broke out between the Greeks and Armenians. The news reached them, however, that certain people would not accept icons, while others would not practise baptism or bless the salt or impose the wedding crown in marriage, all by reason of the fact that the priesthood was removed from the laity. On account of these things Dawit', bishop of Mec Kotmank', wrote and asked Yovhann, an Armenian doctor, the cause of these matters, and he informed him accurately as follows:

"This heresy appeared after the apostles, and iconoclasm first arose among the Greeks; on this account a great council was convened in Caesarea which decreed that images were to be displayed in the house of God. Hereupon the painters became arrogant and claimed to be superior to all other church artists. "Our art", they said, "is light itself, for young and old can understand it, while few can read the holy scriptures." Confusion arose again, and another council held to examine the matter justified the scribes and readers

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Asolik, ii. 2 tr. Dulaurier, pp. 118-20; Arseni K'atalik'oz, *Ganqop'isat'us K'art'isa da Somxit'isa* [*Schism between Georgia and Armenia*] in Th. Zhordaniya, [*Chronicles*], Tiflis, 1892-7, p. 321. See also S. Der Nersessian, 'Une apologie des images au septième siècle', *Byzantion*, xvii (1944-5), pp. 58-87.

and commentators and ranked them above the painters, and from that time down to the days of Movsēs, catholicos of Armenia, the heresy no longer manifested itself. Then, at the time of the schism in the Armenian patriarchate, a great dispute broke out between Movsēs and T'ēodoros, bishop of Karin (Theodosiopolis), called "the chief philosopher"; and we orthodox believers denounced all the Greek sects. Movsēs summoned a synod of the doctors of divinity in his region and instructed them not to commune with the Greeks who submitted to the Council of Chalcedon, for their deeds were false, and not to accept any books, icons, or relics from them. T'ēodoros then ordered the bishops in his part of Armenia to assemble in the town of Karin, saying: "We must elect a catholicos." And they fetched a certain stylite called Yohan, consecrated him, and submitted to the Chalcedonian sect. Not one of them sought the true faith except the blessed Enos, who left them and joined the catholicos Movsēs, and was joyfully received. Movsēs sat in Dwin as catholicos, and the Greeks thought fit to establish Yohan's patriarchal residence near by in Awan, and there was discord between them, for those consecrated by Yohan were not recognized by Movsēs. Then a priest named Yesu, with T'addēos and Grigor,<sup>1</sup> who were from Movsēs' see, left Dwin, went to the canton of Set'k' and dwelt in the wilderness, for they were hermits. And they began to preach, saying: "Destroy the images painted in the churches, and do not commune with worldly priests. Confusion arose in the province and the news reached the patriarch Movsēs, who wrote that they should return immediately; they would not obey his order, however, but left and took up residence in your province of Arçax. When the patriarch asked his scholars about the deeds of these men, they said that the cause lay in the Greek error. They then wrote the following letter:<sup>2</sup> "Let no one offend the icons in the churches." On the death of the patriarch Movsēs and the establishment of Xosrov as ruler, the country was reunited, and they established as patriarch Abraham, a true and worthy man who, having first denounced and anathematized the renegade Council of Chalcedon, was thereupon consecrated. The iconoclasts who had descended upon Albania, however, polluted the country. Then the lord of Gardman seized the three men named in the letter and had them brought in chains to Armenia. They

<sup>1</sup> See Der Nersessian, loc. cit., p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> See N. Akincian, *Handēs Amsōrea*, 1910, pp. 38-39, Der Nersessian, ibid.

appeared before us, and when we asked "Why do you not accept the image of God incarnate?" they replied "Because it is foreign to the commandments and is the act of idolaters who worship all created things; we do not worship icons because the scriptures do not command us to do so." Then we pointed out to them the painting on the tabernacle of Moses and the various sculptures in the temple of Solomon and how they were made in our churches also, and having informed them of this and other like things, we corrected their error.'

Chapter 47. *Information concerning the time when the evil Council of Chalcedon was cursed, and how Albania remained unaffected by the heresy; the schism of the Georgians from the Armenians, and what the catholicos Abraham did concerning the Albanians*

IT was in the forty-third year of the Roman era that Armenia was converted to the faith,<sup>1</sup> and Albania was converted 270 years previously.<sup>2</sup> One hundred and eighty years after the conversion of Armenia, in the days of Babgen, catholicos of Armenia, a council was convened concerning the world-destroying Council of Chalcedon.<sup>3</sup> Greece, Italy, Armenia, Albania, and Georgia unanimously cursed the infamous Council of Chalcedon and the tome of Leo at the command of the pious kings Zeno and Anastasius. Eighty-seven years later, in the days of Abraham, catholicos of Armenia, the Georgians separated from the Armenians through the accursed Kiwrion,<sup>4</sup> and Greece and Italy with them; Albania,

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the forty-third year of the *saeculum novum* = A.D. 290. Adontz, 'Les vestiges d'un ancien culte en Arménie', *Mélanges Franz Cumont*, Bruxelles, 1936, p. 513, dates the conversion of Armenia at A.D. 288, but not convincingly. The writer of the above passage is a doubtful ally.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. A.D. 20; cf. the similar claim at ii. 48, p. 177. For a refutation of the antecedence of the Albanian Church, see Akinean, *Handêš Amsoreā*, 1953, pp. 172-4, who calls the present passage 'a fine example of the policy and chronology of the author [MD]'. We have for the moment left the realm of history.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to the Council of Dwin which approved Zeno's Henotikon of 482 and which is usually dated as A.D. 506 (see Têr-Minassiantz, *Die armenische Kirche*, Leipzig, 1904, pp. 152-7; Tournebize, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie*, Paris, 1910, p. 321), although Akinean, *ibid.*, prefers 508. MD's implied date of 470 (twelve years before the Henotikon) is nonsense.

<sup>4</sup> The implied date of 557 is impossible; 608/9 is the date usually accepted (see Grousset, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-9).

however, did not abandon orthodoxy or communion with Armenia. Abraham, in an encyclical concerning Kiwrion's disobedience, denounced him to all peoples and cut him off with the sword of the spirit. He first informed Albania and wrote a letter to the following effect:<sup>1</sup>

'The see of Albania was established before that of Armenia and agrees with us.<sup>2</sup> We, with their support, have cursed and rejected Kiwrion in accordance with the command which the fathers gave to Rome and which shall be valid for ever. We and the Albanians have laid down the following ordinances concerning Georgia: Do not commune with them in any way whatsoever—in prayer, eating, drinking, friendship, or bringing up children; do not pray at the cross which is said to be at M̄cxit'a (Mtskhetha) or the cross of Manglis;<sup>3</sup> do not receive them into our churches and do not intermarry with them, but only trade with them, as with the Jews. If any should indiscriminately commune with them, may he, being thereby an accomplice in their unbelief, be cursed in body and soul and cut off from the Church of God his whole life long. They who ignore this command shall be dwellers in darkness and fuel for the everlasting fire.'<sup>4</sup>

Chapter 48. *Concerning [the remonstrances made] by the Greeks to the Armenians for not having the nine grades in the hierarchy of the Church; the efforts of the Armenians to make the Albanians subordinate to them as an archbishopric, to which the Albanians do not agree; Siwnik' turns from the Armenians to the Albanians for consecration and chrism*

DURING the reign of the malevolent Marcian<sup>5</sup> over the Romans he, being misled by his wife, the filthy Pulcheria, a renegade Nestorian,<sup>6</sup> shattered and destroyed the articles of orthodox faith by

<sup>1</sup> Thus far this chapter is contained word for word in Uxtanēs [*Schism*], ch. lxix.

<sup>2</sup> See Abraham's encyclical in the *Girk' T'it'oç*, Tiflis, 1901, pp. 188–95, in particular p. 193, l. 2 from bottom: 'before us (they were) established in the rank of catholicos in Albania (*yat'ajagoyñ k'an xmez kaçealk'n yastičani kat'udikosut'ean yAluans*).'

<sup>3</sup> S, E *Mangleaç*; BM *Manglenaç*.

<sup>4</sup> This is only a summary of Abraham's letter; cf. Uxtanēs, op. cit., ch. lxx, where, however, the letter breaks off after 'but only trade with them . . .' See *Girk' T'it'oç*, pp. 194–5.

<sup>5</sup> 450–7.

<sup>6</sup> Pulcheria had played a leading role in the condemnation of Nestorius.

means of the Council of Chalcedon. Hereafter those who accepted it strove on many occasions to make Armenia conform with them by writing letters and convening several councils. They assembled once in Constantinople and twice in Theodosiopolis. They attempted to win them over as men in error, but although by command of the king they relied upon their most erudite Greek orators to prevail by their subtle tongues and Hellenic eloquence, they were answered in the same vein; for learning had been revived in the churches of Armenia and there were experts in the Greek tongue.

The Armenians noised it abroad that Yohann Mayrogomeçi was on the side of the Greeks in opposition to the Armenians. The originator of this calumny was a certain Solomon, a monk who subsequently became catholicos of Armenia. He inquired of his vardapet Solomon, a father in the monastery of Mak'enoc,<sup>1</sup> who wrote and taught as follows:

'The Armenians have not been defeated in matters of faith, but they have been worsted in the following particular: the Greeks have said that "God established the Church with nine grades, the ranks of this nether abode being graded as among the heavenly ones above: the patriarch, who is the chief priest, the archbishop, as the chief bishop is called, the metropolitans, bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons, readers, and psalmists. All these acting together can consecrate the patriarch, and the patriarch can consecrate all of them. Now, if you are of the true faith, state who your patriarch is, for only four were established on earth: the throne of Mark at Alexandria, of Matthew at Antioch, of Luke at Rome, and of John at Ephesus; this is in accordance with the four corners of the universe, the four streams of the river of Eden, the four classes of animals, the four evangelists, the four books of Moses (for Deuteronomy is considered apart). We submit to all, therefore submit you also to one of them or to all of them in order that we may be united in faith. For your St. Gregory was consecrated archbishop in Caesarea, and likewise those after him down to the present time; if, however, you are some other separate church, point to that patriarch to whom your archbishop, who was

<sup>1</sup> Cf. reference to 'the letter of the holy Salômôn, prior of Mak'enoc, which is included in the History of the Ałuank', in the middle part' in St. Orb. xxv, ed. Tiflis, pp. 99-100, tr. Brosset, p. 63; St. Orb. draws upon this, together with the writings of Uxtanēs and St. Maštoç, for his ch. xxvi. See Akinean, *Koriton*, Vienna, 1910, p. 249.

hitherto subject to us, is now subject. If you have neither patriarch nor a complete clergy, it is evident that you are renounced heretics like Arius and other barbarian<sup>1</sup> and heterodox peoples." Having no reply to this, the Armenians were defeated, for the Church was in fact governed thus.

'During his reign Justinian transferred the relics of St. John Evangelist to Constantinople and established a patriarchal throne there; the real throne, however, remained Ephesus. In the same way he transferred the throne of Matthew from Antioch to Jerusalem, claiming that "it was the town of the great King"; but the real throne remained Antioch. Thereafter the arrogant grew very active, and any place where an apostle had died was recognized as a patriarchal see. Once this rule had been established, our own patriarchate was proclaimed.

'The Persians and the Greeks had divided Armenia and Lord Movsēs<sup>2</sup> was on the throne of St. Gregory at Dwin, while a certain Yohan was set up close by on the Greek side in opposition. During this schism of the patriarchate, however, the people of Siwnik' scorned it and submitted to neither side following the command of their bishop, the virtuous Petros, who, when he died, instructed his diocese to accept consecration and the holy chrism from the Albanians until such time as the see of St. Gregory should be reunited. Vrt'anēs was accordingly consecrated bishop by Zak'aria, the holy patriarch of Albania, and Siwnik' received the oil from the Albanians year after year until the opposition came to an end and Abraham ruled alone over the patriarchal see.<sup>3</sup>

'As for that which concerns the nine grades, the prelates of the Church, presumptuously and in accordance with the rude ways of the Armenians, ranked Abraham as patriarch, the head of the Albanian Church as archbishop, and the head of the Georgian Church as metropolitan. The head of the Georgian Church, Kiwrion by name, rebelled and declared his opposition, but the patriarch Abraham stated that the Albanians had preceded the Georgians in the faith and that the rank of archbishop fell to them. As a result of this dispute the Georgians turned from the orthodox faith and became Chalcedonians. The Greek generals at first encouraged

<sup>1</sup> *xužastan-s*, pl. of *xuž* in *-stan*, not to be confused here with *Xužastan* 'Susiana' (HAG, p. 45).

<sup>2</sup> II, c. 574-604; N. Akinean, '[Bishop Petros Siwneçi]', *Handēs Amsorea*, 1904, pp. 20-21, suggests that Yovhannēs II is meant; see Brosset, *Histoire de la Siounie*, i, p. 56, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. St. Orb. xxii, tr. Brosset, p. 54.



them to seek precedence over the Albanians, but the latter would not yield and pointed to a certain apostle who came in ancient times to Albania, Eliša by name, one of the disciples of the Lord who was consecrated by James, brother of the Lord, and who preached there and built a church before there was one in Armenia, namely, the church of Gis, the first mother church of the east.<sup>1</sup> Putting their trust in him, the Albanians turned from the Armenians in order to be subject to no one's authority. Then the Armenians, on account of the arrogance of the Greeks who would belittle the resting-place of the apostle Thaddaeus for having no archbishop or metropolitan, decided to make the bishop of the Mardpet a metropolitan, but gave him only the cross and the title with no power to consecrate bishops. He asked to be given two or three bishops, but the heads of the Church would not comply with this request, fearing that some other schism might develop in the now united see. Then, observing the lords of Siwnik' to be god-fearing and obedient to their commands and the clergy of their churches to be learned and orthodox in all respects, they gave them the rank of metropolitan of Armenia with authority to bear the crosier; they were not to assume more than this, however, and were not to proclaim their chief priest an archbishop. For the rest they permitted the land to retain its previous customs in order that no confusion might arise, and accordingly the Siwnians do not call themselves an archbishopric and do not sign themselves as such in answer to letters from Armenia; if it had been proclaimed such, it would be written such, and since it has not been proclaimed, it is not written. The bearing of the cross before the metropolitan is to the glory of the Lord, and the privilege of a simple cross and herald is the customary emblem of one not inferior to him. Thus the nine grades were established; and the clergy<sup>2</sup> in Siwnik' would

<sup>1</sup> These details Uxtanēs [*Schism*], ch. lxv, p. 122, says he has taken from the History of the Ałuank' (*i patmut'enē iwreanç* [sc. *Ałuaniç*]) or 'the historians of the Albanians' (*i patmagraçn Ałuaniç*). If he is referring to MD (and note that his ch. lxix agrees word for word with part of MD ii. 47, p. 174), then it must rather be to i. 6 than the present chapter. The 'other history' (*ayl patmut'iwon*) mentioned as the source of his ch. lxiv, though concerning Albania's chronological precedence as Christians over the Armenians, does not seem to refer to MD; see I. A. Dzhevakhov, 'Istoriya tserkovnago razryva mezhdru Gruziei i Armeniei v nachale VII veka', *Izvestiya Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*, St. Petersburg, 1908, p. 436.

<sup>2</sup> *iêrunih'*; NBHL suggests the meaning *uxi êkeleçwoy* 'clergy' for this passage, but interprets the phrase as 'the clergy in Siwnik' wrote "Spiritual Lord" [to the primates of Siwnik'].



write "Spiritual Lord" and they [the Armenian catholicoi?] "From [your] servant". Then, [owing] to the crude behaviour<sup>1</sup> of Lord Etia in Ericoy Vank' when he went to Albania,<sup>2</sup> [the Armenians] ceased to write "From [your] servant" and they [the Siwnians] suppressed the [epithet] "Spiritual".<sup>3</sup>

'That is the truth of the matter.'

Chapter 49. *The reply given by the Armenians to the letter of Mxit'ar, bishop of Amaras, concerning some blasphemies contained in his writings*

'To you, greatly honoured and revered [Albanian fathers], who voluntarily refer to the weakness in your propositions and reject what is unseemly and who, I must say, are like and equal in zeal to the Athenian fathers, [being] the new disciples and historians of the modern age in the north who listen to all things with discrimination, above all that which concerns the cultivation of consistency in thought, to you, Lord Mxit'ar, bishop of Amaras, Simëon, bishop of Mec Irank', and other likeminded bishops of the holy church, and to the nobles and others of the Albanian people, we, Abraham, catholicos of Armenia, T'ëodoros, bishop of the Mardpet, Step'annos, bishop of Bagrewand, Dawit', bishop of Siwnik', Movsēs, bishop of the Xotxorunik', K'ristap'or, bishop of the Apahunik', and other bishops and clergy and nobles, send you our sincere and spiritual greeting in the Lord with eager prayers and great supplications.

'In writing to us, you told us of your holy worship and of your desire to know whether persons with no wish to oppose had

<sup>1</sup> *xakagorcut'ean*; usually 'revolt, sedition', in which sense Brosset has taken it in his translation of the parallel passage of St. Orb. (below, n. 3).

<sup>2</sup> Etia Arčišeci, catholicos of Armenia 703-17; see below, iii. 3-10, on his journey to Albania to depose Nersēs Bakur with the support of the caliph; what role Ericoy Vank' played is unknown.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the parallel passage in St. Orb. xxv, p. 105: 'and in writing letters the Siwnik' do not write [to] the Catholicos [as] "Chief bishop" (*episkoposapet*) or by another name; but the clergy (*tērunik'*) in Siwnik' (*i Siwnik'* for MD *i Siwnis*) wrote "Honoured by God" (*Astuačapatiw*) and "Spiritual Lord" (*hogewor Tēr*), and they (*noḱ'a*) "From [your] servant"; but [because] of the crude behaviour of Etia Catholicos in Eriču Vank' while he was going to bring Albania to submission, these (*soḱ'a*) did not write "From [your] servant" and they (*noḱ'a*) the [epithet] "Spiritual". In the words of Brosset, *Histoire de la Siounie*, i, p. 67, n. 5, 'les formules ici énumérées n'offrent pas un sens très clair'.

perhaps created an opposition; [notice of this] we received from a Siwnian naxarar named Grigor, for he said "concerning your servant, [he has] renounced the Poet."<sup>1</sup> We were aware of your striving for piety, however, and your desire to share the perfect confession of our blessed forefathers, and although we received various reports from him<sup>2</sup> we were nevertheless restrained and guided by lenience in these matters on account of the sincere friendship which existed between our ancestors and yours. We wish to consider the short confession of faith which you have written and to compare it with the teaching of the Holy Ghost [in order to see where] it deviates from or corresponds to the truth after informing ourselves of many matters. Give me your opinion concerning that which you consider to be wrong and do not range yourselves in opposition, for such is not the custom of the Church of God. Your letter acquainted us, after some faint praise, with an accusation concerning a man designated as "weaker"<sup>3</sup> and the folly and absurdity of our believing in him, and maintaining that "we are no less than you, but fully equal to you in the faith, for the apostles and teachers preached the gospel equally and uniformly [to us both]". A few lines further on, your doctrine concerning the nature of the Holy Trinity prior to the everlasting creation is propounded differently from our own. Much further on, you have represented the Incarnation in a manner which deviates from the teaching of the Church of Christ as received from the apostles and in a way which the scriptures do not support; [they are the views] of wolves who steal men from it [the Church of Christ] and by saying perverse things draw their pupils after them. As for the other opinions which do not comply with our own and seem made to deceive the simple-minded, the door of falsehood is closed to us believers.

'This being so, reverend fathers, consider your confession of

<sup>1</sup> Obscure, Patkanean declining to translate. E has an intelligible reading: *k'anxi ew sarbanahēnjer asaḡ i hertotēn hrašarcal*; BM . . . *jeroy asaḡ hertloy* . . . ; P4 . . . *jeroy asaḡ Kertloy* . . . ; P5 . . . *zarbenekēn jeroy asaḡ Kertloy* . . . ; P1 . . . *zbarekamin jeroy asaḡ Kertloy* . . . ; S . . . *zbarekamin jeroy asaḡ Kir Tloy* . . . The parallel passage in the *Girk' T'it'oḡ* (see below, n. 2) has *k'anxi ew sarbanekēn asaḡ i kēr udwoy hrašari*. The *hertol* 'poet' referred to must be Vrt'anēs K'ertol, *locum tenens* of the Armenian see 604-7, named in the title of the letter reproduced in the *Girk' T'it'oḡ*.

<sup>2</sup> Down to here this letter in MD agrees, with many variant readings however, with that in the *Girk' T'it'oḡ*, ed. Tiflis, 1901, pp. 196-7, l. 3; hereafter they diverge.

<sup>3</sup> Or 'very weak': *tkaragoyñ*.

faith and where it leads you, and how it estranges you from the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Examine matters profoundly, distinguish the light from the darkness, and give explicit, comprehensive and clear answers. You who are desirous of good, lift your sharp eyes with me towards the abode of the Trinity, as Paul teaches the Romans to do: "For the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Holy Spirit to strive together with me in prayers to God" [Rom. xv. 30]. Thus did he preach the glory of the Holy Trinity and teach that all the apostolic testimonies are full of these words, in the name of which [apostles] we received the command to baptize and achieve glory in one single form of worship. Now wherefore do we cause division in the Church of God which the Son of God gathered together in one fold? Let us not become as Nadab and Abihu and worship strange fire like unbelievers, that we may not become consumed by fire. Let us not offend Christ, who would suffer for us again, by changing the faith, that we may not receive the curse which Noah pronounced upon Canaan from Him who separates the sheep from the goats. For this matter concerns us and you also, Mxit'ar, who are the appointed head of the Church of Amaras which you claim to have been founded by Gregory and to have the same faith as he and his descendants as intercessor with Christ God. Since we are his joint heirs, let it not be rumoured that you are becoming slaves to the sins of Canaan and not to the confessor of Judah. Let no command be given to divide the Church in two and to assign a part thereof to deceivers. If we be the sons of those fathers whose faith does not differ from that of the apostles, let us hold fast to their teachings, and let us not counterfeit unadulterated milk by mixing water with lime, for He of whose name we are so proud will be the very one to accuse us before the heavenly Father. Let us not be deluded by a multitude of grievances, but let us, in accordance with the parable, not be of one mind with the many in things which are evil, but endeavour to be with the eight people who were protected among the multitude who brought down upon themselves the scourge of God, to be liberated with Lot from the fiery rain, and to enter into the promised land with the two out of the six thousand who fell dead on the spot. For a friendly voice echoes over the mountains and says: "Do not fear, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom." We shall encourage the obdurate to act in this way, but we keep and shall keep the form of worship of the Holy Trinity as

we received it forever faithfully, and we shall shun every brother who rebels in this matter.'

This material, which is presented solely for non-commercial educational/research purposes, appears in C. J. F. Dowsett's *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movses Dasxuranc'i* (London, 1961), pp. 193-197.

---

**Movses Dasxurants'i's**

***History of the Aghuans***

**Book Three**

---

[List of Abbreviations](#)

[Page 193]

Chapter 8. *The signature which Etia, catholicos of Armenia, exacted from the Albanian synod for the sake of unity and a firm alliance between the Armenians and the Albanians*

'SINCE our enemy Satan, who hates virtue and opposes the salvation of our fellow-men, ensnares with many and divers evils, as is his wont, the simple-minded among men and combats the children of the Church, and coveting the elect, contrives his devices in conformity with his inborn nature, in accordance with the text: "our adversary the devil roars like a lion, [seeking] whom he might devour" [1 Pet. v. 8]; since at the beginning of creation the same wickedness and perversion banished us from the tree of life and the sweet delights of paradise, for Satan has from the beginning sinned above all through the weak and unstable minds of senseless men led astray by the devil, who walk bemused in the paths of evil and for whom the light of the glory of Christ will not shine; since the tempter was deprived of those who through original sin and his perverse deception worshipped idols, he has now decided to achieve the same results by the agency of unwise men who disunite the Church of God by innovations and in an unholy fashion, dividing its possessions and members.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly there now appears among us the bitter evil root of the heresies of Nestorius and Maximus through [the fault of] the ungodly Nersēs who, owing to the indulgence of the Holy Ghost, was elected to the primacy of this house of Albania and by his cunning became the destroyer of the faith and the corrupter of our souls. With his unworthy hands he destroyed the redeeming tradition of our fathers who preached the message of the apostles and were confirmed in the Church by sinless hands; he dispersed the zealous bishop of orthodox faith and those who held to tradition. Some he insultingly exiled to foreign countries; others, filled with sorrow, he tormented. He ruined the

<sup>1</sup> 704-6.

<sup>2</sup> *zēahs ew zgluxs*, lit. 'possessions and heads'.

precious episcopal dioceses and brought confusion upon the dwellings of the hermit monks. Through him the valued members of the holy body of Christ were put asunder and the sons of Sion wholly led astray by his deceit. The temple of our holiness was corrupted, as [it is said] in the lamentation of Jeremiah: "the glory of our holiness has gone and in the four-cornered universe our pride is put out and destroyed" [?]. Let one now, however, bless and give thanks to God the Saviour, who has not permitted the enemy of mankind to succeed completely, but having mercy on our weakness and taking pity on our people has sent you to us, honoured father Elia, by the grace of God catholicos of Armenia, a man holy and true, seated upon the throne of St. Gregory, together with your bishops and doctors Simēon, bishop of the Xoixorunik', Sargis, bishop of the Amatunik', Sargis, bishop of Rotak, and the doctor Yovhannēs. With many other of your followers you arrived in our capital Partaw and by your gentle teaching banished evil from our midst. Remembering the traditions of our forefathers, you gave new life to the throne of our patriarchate in the person of a godly man of whose integrity we ourselves are witnesses. By virtue thereof, all of us, namely Simēon, catholicos of Albania, Yovhannēs, bishop of Kapalak, Simēon, bishop of Hoš, Sahak, bishop of Amaras, the saintly K'šik, abbot of the monastery of Nersmih, together with all those of our clergy who have been preserved from heresy; and the abbot of the monastery of Gut,<sup>1</sup> the abbot of the monastery of Katar, the abbot of the monastery of St. Joseph, Dawit', monk of Kalankaytuk', Petros, monk of Tgrakert, Połos, monk of Ałacob, and the Christ-loving Šeroy, prince of Albania, Juank'oy, sparapet of Albania, the patricius Vardan and his brother Gagik, Bab i Hrahatean, Vaxtang i Varazmanean, Patrik i K'aroyean of the race of kings, Vahan i Varaz-Yohanean, T'ēodoros yAnastoyean, Rostom i Varazk'oyean, Zarmihr i Varaz-K'urdak'ean of the race of kings, Mahmat i Šeroyean,<sup>2</sup> and all the freemen (*azatk'*) of this country have blessed and unanimously accepted, both priests and laymen, our apostolic faith which was first established by St. Eliseus and later confirmed by St. Gregory, a faith which until now has never erred. When temptations came, God sent us His succour through you, the representative of St. Gregory, of whose

<sup>1</sup> *Gtay vank'*.

<sup>2</sup> V. Minorsky explains the form of these names as 'the Persian construction with the patronymic *idāfat*' ('Caucasica, IV', *BSOAS* xv (1953), p. 508, n. 6).



orthodox faith we are the disciples, as we shall be those of the Lord Elia, catholicos of Armenia, who has taken revenge upon the enemy of righteousness.

'And now we shall curse all heretics, the first and the last and those between: Eunomius<sup>1</sup> and his master Arius, Valentinus, Apollinarius, Diodorus, Mani, Marcion, Eutyches, Nestorius, Theodoret, the Council of Chalcedon, and the Tome of Leo, and Maximus and his followers; along with these we have also cursed our wretched Nersēs who was won over by the duophysite heresy and those whom he in turn persuaded. We have all agreed upon the same articles of faith before God and Your Holiness, and from this time forth no one of us shall presume to stray outside the traditions of our fathers. If any such rash men should again arise who would again introduce among us some new doctrine, may they be cursed by the Holy Trinity and our united community, and may they not partake of the gifts of the Spirit or come to the promised land. If it should be one of the bishops, he shall be deposed from his office and shall fall from his elevated throne; if it be one of the priests, he shall suffer in like fashion; if it be one of the monks, he shall be anathematized and driven out; if it be a freeman, he shall be excommunicated and shall not mingle with the congregation until he return to orthodoxy.

'(Likewise concerning the consecration of our catholicos; originally they received it from Jerusalem down to [the time of] St. Gregory, and from then until now they have received it from our own bishops.)<sup>2</sup> But now, since this consecration has been performed in an inexperienced and indiscriminating manner, in such a way that our country became schismatic, we have resolved before God and Your Holiness that the consecration of the patriarchs of Albania shall be performed by the see of St. Gregory with the assent of this country, (and the consecration of the see of Armenia shall be by the incumbent of the see of Albania, for the latter is older than that of you Armenians.)<sup>3</sup> Let no one presume to act

<sup>1</sup> BM, VI, 2 *z-eunomios*; P4 *zew nonnios*; P2, 3, 5, Ant., S, E *z-nominos*; P1 *znmin*.

<sup>2</sup> So P4, BM, D633, D1721; P1, 2, 3, 5, E, S, D1682: 'We have also set down a statute concerning the consecration of the catholicos of Albania. For a brief period our catholicos were accorded their rank by our own bishops.'

<sup>3</sup> So P4, BM, D633, D1721; P1, 2, 3, 5, E, S, D1682: 'as was the custom from St. Gregory onwards, for we were enlightened thence; we are confident that you will select them in a way pleasing to God and ourselves.'

contrary to the terms of this agreement; should any do so, it shall be null and void and the consecration (of both)<sup>1</sup> shall be considered invalid. Whoever in fear of God complies with this canon shall be blessed by the Holy Trinity and by all the orthodox servants of God; and should any oppose this and err from the truth, he shall answer for it, whoever he might be, before God.

'This document was written by mutual agreement and with the intercession of God for the sake of the strength and stability of the faith between the two parties in the eighty-fifth year of the Tačiks and the 148th year of the Armenians in the month of Hrodiç, and was sealed in accordance with the wishes of those whose names are written above.'<sup>2</sup>

#### Chapter 9. *An account of the agreement by the Lord Elia, catholicos of Armenia, addressed to the Albanians*

'THE heretical Nersēs in Albania sowed much confusion in matters of faith and tainted the minds of many men with the duophysite heresy of Chalcedon, thus endangering in his treacherous wickedness bishops, priests, and monks. Being informed of this, I, Elia, catholicos of Armenia, came with my bishops to your most famous town of Partaw in Albania. Clergy and laymen assembled before me and showed me that letter which cursed Nersēs and deposed him from the catholicosate of Albania. Although he had been established on the episcopal throne, albeit by tyranny, the same bishops and the entire assembly of the Church cursed him in a sealed statement with the mediation of God and in agreement with us. They decreed: "we are firm in the faith and do not communicate with the false heresy of Chalcedon and the evil teaching of Bakur". If they conform to this agreement and the traditions of the holy fathers, accept them and love them as your spiritual overseers, but if any one, be he catholicos or bishop, infringe this decree, he shall

<sup>1</sup> So P4, BM, D633, D1721; P1, 2, 3, 5, E, S, D1682 om. See Datean, 'Niw't'er Aluaniç Patmut'ean usumnasirut'ean hamar', *Ararat*, 1897, pp. 68-69, and Introduction, p. xi.

<sup>2</sup> The synchronism is inexact. 85 H = 14.1.704-2.1.705, 148 A = 5.6.669-3.6.700; the latter date is wrong, for Elia was not then catholicos of Armenia. If Hrodiç of the year 148 A is meant, it refers to the period 30.4-29.5.700, if Hrodiç of the year 85 H, i.e. 152 A, is meant, it refers to the period 29.4-28.5.704. May 704 is a possible date for the Council of Partaw, for it was not until some time in or after June 704 that Šeroy was taken to Syria (see below, iii. 16, p. 208).



have no authority over you. You must stand in your churches and constantly pray to God, and may you be ruled by Him and the orthodox teachers. I have given this letter, written to comfort you, to the godly K'shik, prior of the abbot of Ners-Mihr, and to Grigor, prior of the monastery of Joseph.

'I, Elia, catholicos of Armenia, together with my bishops, have concluded a treaty of union with the Albanian people, and I have given you this account thereof that no one may presume to break the oaths which have been sworn. I have given the two letters, sealed with my seal, into the hands of the godly father K'shik to be kept in the monastery of Ners-Mihr.'

This material, which is presented solely for non-commercial educational/research purposes, appears in C. J. F. Dowsett's *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movses Dasxuranc'i* (London, 1961), pp. 198-202.

---

**Movses Dasxurants'i's**

***History of the Aghuans***

**Book Three**

---

[List of Abbreviations](#)

[Page 198]

Chapter 11. *The canons of Lord Simēon, catholicos of Albania, after the downfall of Nersēs*<sup>2</sup>

THESE canons were laid down by Simēon, catholicos of Albania, upon his succession to the see at the council convened on account of the accursed Nersēs, who corrupted the rules of the Church, because of which it became necessary to readjust them. Beneficent, philanthropic, and almighty God wished in his mildness and great mercy to have pity on us and by reason of his great love he appointed us pastor, overseer, and primate of his intelligent flock, which is the holy and apostolic Church, Christ granting us this great and divine honour not because of any good works or worthiness on our part, but because, in accordance with his great mercy, he himself wished to grant us gifts in his grace; as the blessed apostle, through whom Christ spoke, says: "The Holy Spirit has made you pastors and overseers to watch over his flock with righteousness; I enjoin you to take heed unto yourselves and unto the flock" [Acts xx. 28]. When the Lord commanded Moses concerning the priests, he said: "I shall appoint thee chief and leader of my people, to warn them to keep my commandments; be diligent and brave and be not idle." In the same way the Lord admonishes us through other prophets: "Son of man, I have appointed thee a watchman over my people; warn them of my words as from me, to turn the sinner and the wicked from his evil path that he may live; and if thou givest no warning, his blood I will require from thine hands" [cf. Ezek. iii. 17-18]. This terrible and awful command we have from the Lord, and this also: "I gave you power to forgive sins and to free men from the bonds of sin." We have not

<sup>1</sup> *Dlmanç-n*; see *Dlmunk'*, &c., HAG, pp. 34-35.

<sup>2</sup> These are the 'seven canons' referred to at iii. 23, p. 229, but the text allows of no logical division into seven. Patkanean has divided it into six.

of ourselves or by force assumed this power and honour and the apostolic throne, but God, creator and maker of all things, has appointed us in this place to shepherd his people according to his pleasure. Therefore, my honoured friends and brothers, chosen disciples of Christ and faithful ministers of his commandments, it is fitting and worthy for us to cause the fruit of God to grow good and sweet for his pleasure and to build upon the apostolic foundation, which is Jesus Christ, with gold, silver and precious stones, that is, divers virtues and all good works, that when we appear before the Saviour our God we may receive the unfading crown of glory. Now, by the grace of the Holy Spirit and his commandments, as the Lord commanded us through prophets and apostles and vardapets, namely, that we must first love God with all our heart and keep his commandments, so I command you to maintain solid and firm that which we received from our true and godly fathers; likewise to maintain unhindered the rules of the holy Church and to make it glorious through blameless priests and ministers; to love each other as yourselves; to live the monastic life in unity according to the canonical command; not to allow unworthy and military men to acquire authority in the Church; to fornicators, adulterers, murderers, thieves, liars, perjurers, robbers, and evil-eyed and grasping men, and especially to soldiers and cavalymen and tax collectors, let no one dare give authority in the Church, or its bread and income; for by divine law only blameless priests who make the offerings and the ministers of the altar may use what the people offer to the house of God on account of their sins; for the gifts belong to them, as does praying to God day and night for peace in the country and remission of sins and health of body and soul. It is commanded that the unworthy and the military<sup>1</sup> are not to have authority in the Church and thus bring wrath upon themselves and the country; for the Lord of glory, when he instructed Moses concerning the tabernacle, said: "Choose pure and unblemished priests from the tribe of Levi and no soldier or any unworthy trespasser or blemished person from

<sup>1</sup> *zintworaç*; *zintvor* is translated as *laicus* by K. Amatuni in his codification of the canons of the Armenian Church (*Disciplina armena*, fasc. vii of the series *Codificazione canonica orientale—Fonti*, Sacra Congregazione Orientale, Vatican, 1932); cf. canon No. 162 (of Sahak the Great): 'Indoctos vere, et laicos (*zintwoors*) omnino extrudere debemus, neque eos ad participationem admittere fructuum, vel oblationum, quas populus tribuit domo Dei, usque vel ipsi vel eorum filii erudiantur, et dignos se reddant'; cf. also Nos. 175, 178.

the other tribes of Israel"; as the laws say: "let not the unworthy stand before my altar or dare to eat of the offerings".<sup>1</sup> The priest-hoods [of those] who behave unworthily shall be rejected and cut off from the inheritance. Let not the ordinary people usurp the ministry, the order or the place of priests; if any one should presume to do so, he shall be punished and slain like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were swallowed into the earth, and like Uzza and many others who dared to exceed their station and minister unto God. For the tabernacle and the priests were models for the new covenant of the holy Church, into which no unworthy men or soldiers dared enter; moreover, the apostles enforced the same commandment by order of the Saviour, saying: "It has pleased the Holy Spirit and ourselves to ordain thus: let no soldiers or unworthy persons presume to submit the church to their authority; he who dares to do so shall be anathema." Our blessed fathers also confirmed this: "Let no one have authority to give the Church of God into the hands of unworthy men and soldiers, or to trade it like property, or to give it to princes or their governors as a gift. Likewise the priests shall not dare to give the offerings or the bread to the brothers and sons of unworthy men, nor trade the inheritance of the Church; but if the priest and (his) brothers and sons be found in unworthiness, they shall be rejected from the inheritance; and those who presume to do thus shall be anathema." We have that command from God and his commandments, and it is not proper to oppose God. And today also all laymen observe the same law concerning the churches, for when they sell their own private villages they write into the deed that which belongs to the Church and Church land. The churches of God are free and under the authority of no one but the bishops and those to whom they give them, that is, blameless and true holy priests, and not unworthy soldiers; let no one henceforth dare give them to these latter, for it is contrary to God's commandments, and it means perdition of body and soul to deliver the freedom of the Church into the hands of the unworthy. With regard to this, I hear many complaints to the effect that in many places soldiers have possession of the churches of God with the office of prior; with regard to their evil works they are not even fit to enter the Church, let alone to eat the bread and offerings of the Church. Concerning this

<sup>1</sup> These passages appear to be references to, not quotations from, Ex. xxix. 33, Num. i. 52, iii. 5-10, &c.

the godly K'sik, abbot of the monastery of Nersmih, has written to say that Varaz-Trdat, prince of Albania, had given a small village to the holy cross to administer for the sake of his soul, but that now a cavalryman called P'usan-Veh, a layman living in debauchery, produces documents to the effect that the prince of Albania gave him the church together with the office of prior because he had been his tutor.<sup>1</sup> With regard to this, beloved brethren, these laws shall be valid from this time forth, and in accordance with the commandment of the Holy Spirit, P'usan-Veh shall not retain that church, but unsullied and unblemished priests shall govern it, for he received no authority from God or from us.

'Now I, Simēon, by the grace of God catholicos of Albania, have commanded in accordance with divine ordinances and canons that priests alone, the true and orthodox ones who did not accept the heresies of the wretched Nersēs, shall enjoy rights within the Church of God, and that soldiers and laymen shall have no power over the Church and shall not appropriate its gifts by force. If any one dare to do so, he shall be punished by God and by us. And if any should produce a deed concerning a church made in accordance with lay and secular laws but not with the divine ordinances and canons, it is null and void, and no one shall accept it as legal. For God commanded bishops and priests to tend the Church, and not soldiers and cavalrymen and unworthy persons.

'Now you, friends and brothers, bishops assigned as colleagues to the holy see, keep these divine canonical laws in every diocese and allow no presumption to oppress the churches of God and allow no priests to be reduced to servility, so that God may be reconciled with us, and having mercy upon us, may deliver us from all oppression. For the Lord has said: "Cast not your pearls before swine, and give not that which is holy to the dogs" [Matt. vii. 6]; as God was pleased to call himself the Holy of Holies, he is himself to be served by blameless priests and not by unworthy persons.

'Now, I command all to heed the commandments of God and to render unceasing thanksgiving to merciful God for having taken vengeance upon the duophysitism of the filthy Nersēs, for having uprooted his evil tare from among us and for planting the roots of peace in our Church. Wherefore tend the needs of the Church

<sup>1</sup> Thus Varaz-Trdat, like his wife Spram (above, iii. 3, p. 189), incurred the disfavour of the Church.

with vigilance, for we must all appear before the awful tribunal of Christ and give a reckoning for the people and ourselves. Again I beseech you and say, be vigilant, and may the Holy Spirit be upon you. Amen.'

This material, which is presented solely for non-commercial educational/research purposes, appears in C. J. F. Dowsett's *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movses Dasxuranc'i* (London, 1961), pp. 205-206.

---

**Movses Dasxurants'i's**

***History of the Aghuans***

**Book Three**

---

[List of Abbreviations](#)

[Page 205]



Chapter 14. *An inquiry by the same Mik'ayēl, patriarch of Albania, into the dumbness of Zacharias and the Nativity and Epiphany of the Saviour, against the duophysite sect*

FOR the Israelites Moses established the first day of the seventh month, that is, Tishri, as the Feast of Trumpets, the tenth day as the Feast of Atonement, the fifteenth day as the Feast of Tabernacles. The dumbness of Zacharias [lasted] from the seventeenth day until the twenty-second day of the same month of Tishri. Then he went to his home; and Elizabeth his wife conceived and, in the words of the evangelist Luke, 'for five months she hid herself and in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God' [Luke i. 24, 26]. Now let us see what this sixth month might be. We have consulted the calendar and found as follows: the twenty-second day of Tishri is the ninth day of the Roman month of October. Now we begin to count six months from the tenth day and arrive at the seventh day of April; this is in accordance with [the notice concerning the coming of] the angel in the sixth month. The Annunciation to the Virgin [fell] on the twelfth day of the Hebrew month Nisan; from thence to the fifth day of January<sup>1</sup> is 270 days, which is nine months, and [then occurred] the Nativity of Christ. We also possess what the vardapets have said. Nativity, Epiphany and the Annunciation are celebrated by the Church as one feast,<sup>2</sup> as one of the godly vardapets has said: 'the word [of God] attributes to us three births: one by the breath [of life], the second by becoming flesh and baptism, which are reckoned as one birth, and the third by resurrection.' Similarly Mark, the patriarch of Jerusalem, who was one of the Nicaean fathers, wrote in his letter of advice to the Armenians concerning the Baptism, saying that 'we celebrate the Nativity and the Baptism on one day'. And as death

<sup>1</sup> So BM, E, &c.; S has *April*.

<sup>2</sup> See M. Ormanean, *Gisakan bairan*, Anthelias, 1957, pp. 11, 14-15.

and burial remain unfulfilled without the Resurrection, (so does birth without baptism);<sup>1</sup> and as the gospel in [relating] the Resurrection [of Christ] first describes the Crucifixion and the Entombment and then mentions the Resurrection, similarly [baptism?] effects Salvation, about which the theologian again speaks. But now [about] the feast of the Epiphany, for God appeared born as a man. The bishops of Jerusalem, 42 bishops down to Cyril, and after them others down to Juvenal, celebrated the feast of the Nativity and Epiphany on the 6th January. One reckoned 400 years from the Ascension to Juvenal. Again [we must mention him] who states in a passage about David and James that in other cities they accept 25th December as the Nativity of Christ; in other cities they say that this belief derived from the heathens and not from the Circumcision, and that among the heathens one was accustomed to celebrate the birth of the sun on that day and that for this reason they would not agree to discontinue the feast. The apostles were obliged to yield to them and to fix the Feast of the Nativity for them on that day; but those [who received the tradition] from the Circumcision everywhere celebrate the feast on the 6th January, as it was handed down to our forefathers. So do we hold now, for it is said: 'the laws shall go forth from Sion and the word of God from Jerusalem' [Isaiah ii. 3].

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(For details of MSS., editions, translation, etc., see Introduction)

AC	Anonymous chronicle ( <i>Anamun žamanakagrut'iwon</i> )
Ant.	Anthelias MS.
BM	British Museum MS.
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London</i>
BZ	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
D	List of variant readings prepared by X. Datean
E	Ėmin's edition of the <i>Patmut'iwon Ałuanic</i>
El.	Elisē Vardapet, <i>Patmut'iwon Vardananç . . .</i>
E. Tk.	Eastern Turkish, Turkī
FB	P'awstos Buzandaçi, <i>Patmut'iwon Hayoç</i>
HA	<i>Handēs Amsōrea</i> , Vienna (periodical)
HAG	H. Hübschmann, <i>Armenische Grammatik</i> , Leipzig, 1895
Hipp.	<i>Hippolytus Werke</i> , 4 <sup>er</sup> Band, Berlin, 1955
LP	Łazar P'arpeçi, <i>Patmut'iwon Hayoç</i> , Venice, 1933
MD	Movsēs Dasxurançi, otherwise Kałankaytuaçi, <i>Patmut'iwon Ałuanic</i>
MX	Movsēs Xorenaçi, <i>Patmut'iwon Hayoç</i>
NA	<i>Noyean Aławni</i> , Constantinople (periodical)
NBHL	<i>Nor Bağirk' Haykazean Lezui</i> , Venice, 1836-7
NP	New Persian
O. Ir.	Old Iranian
P	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS.
Patk.	K'. Patkanean, <i>Istoriya Agvan . . .</i> (Russian translation of the <i>Patmut'iwon Ałuanic</i> )
Phl.	Pahlavi
Q	Qarabagh MS.
S	Šahnazarean's edition of the <i>Patmut'iwon Ałuanic</i>
St. Orb.	Step'annos Ōrbēlean, <i>Patmut'iwon nahangin Sisakan</i> , Tiflis, 1910
TA	T'ovma Arcruni, <i>Patmut'iwon tann Arcruneaç</i> , St. Petersburg, 1887
V	Venice (San Lazzaro) MS.